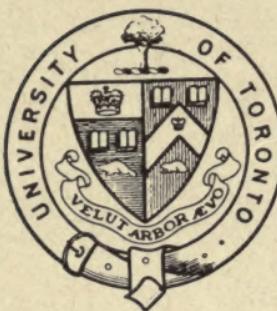


3
E 1761 04634296 0

THE BRITISH SOLDIER

E. J. HARDY



Presented to the

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
LIBRARY

by the

ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE
LIBRARY

1980

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation



**THE BRITISH SOLDIER
HIS COURAGE AND HUMOUR**

36045

THE BRITISH SOLDIER

His Courage and Humour



g. 13

BY

REV. E. J. HARDY, M.A.

Chaplain to the Forces (Retired)

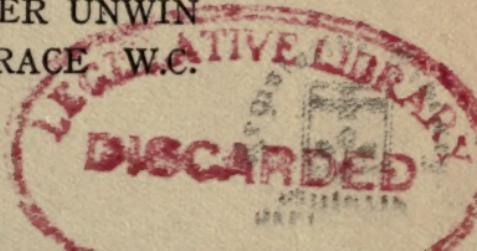
Author of "How to be Happy though Married,"
"Mr. Thomas Atkins," etc. etc.

"Nous entendons dire de tous côtés que vos pauvres Tommies se battent comme des lions et que chaque jour ils font des exploits magnifiques. Ils sont bons garçons et très drôles."—(Extract from a French lady's letter.)



LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
1 ADELPHI TERRACE W.C.

1915





[First published in 1915]

D
640
H 326

(All rights reserved.)

TO
THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES
OR THEIR HEALTH
TO
SAVE CIVILISATION FROM BARBARISM
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
PREFACE	- - - - -	ix
I. UP TO SAMPLE	- - - - -	I
II. COURAGE	- - - - -	7
III. COURAGE AND DISCIPLINE	- - - - -	17
IV. BOYS OF THE BULLDOG BREED	- - - - -	29
V. FACING FEARFUL ODDS	- - - - -	37
VI. FIGHTS TO A FINISH	- - - - -	45
VII. CAVALRY CHARGES	- - - - -	52
VIII. GRIT AND GUNS	- - - - -	57
IX. GALLANTRY OF INDIVIDUALS	- - - - -	68
X. SELF PUT ASIDE	- - - - -	78
XI. BROTHERS-IN-ARMS	- - - - -	91
XII. UNDER FIRE	- - - - -	101
XIII. "I'VE GOT IT"	- - - - -	110
XIV. FROM FEAR TO HEROISM	- - - - -	117
XV. UNCOMMON COMBATS	- - - - -	123
XVI. IN THE TRENCHES	- - - - -	132

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVII. NOT DOWNHEARTED	142
XVIII. PLAY AND WORK	148
XIX. WAR AS A GAME	158
XX. THE COURAGE THAT BEARS	164
XXI. IN A MILITARY HOSPITAL	170
XXII. READY TO RETURN	176
XXIII. FASHIONS AT THE FRONT	182
XXIV. GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS	189
XXV. UNCONSCIOUS HUMORISTS	199
XXVI. NICKNAMES	209
XXVII. TENDER-HEARTED BECAUSE BRAVE	213
XXVIII. WHAT THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS THINK	228

PREFACE

I DID not need a war of nations to learn about the courage and humour of the British soldier. As a book I wrote called "Mr. Thomas Atkins" shows, I had studied and appreciated him during the thirty-one years in which I served as Chaplain to the Forces. Still, it was pleasant to read despatches and letters from the seat of war highly praising my old friend. This book is based upon the strong, clear letters of Mr. Thomas Atkins (I am never guilty of the impertinence of calling him "Tommy") which were written amidst the stress and strain of war, often even in the pauses of battle. I have done little more than select and classify the letters of that best of war correspondents—the British soldier. The letters are a credit to his head and his heart, and throw a searchlight on the war. The soldier wrote of the things he knew about, and the result is that we can see his pen pictures.

PREFACE

I would like to express my indebtedness to the newspapers in which the letters were printed, but find it difficult to do so as the letters were all over the Press, so to speak, and many of them quoted without mention of the paper from which they were taken. I know, however, that *The Times*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Daily Chronicle*, *The Evening News*, *The Star*, *The Standard*, *Reynolds' Newsletter*, and *News of the World* are amongst the papers from which I have taken extracts.

What effect has war upon those engaged in it ? A reflective soldier thus answers : " If war brings out the brutal instincts, it reveals the God-like also, for I have come across scores of instances of sacrifice even unto death among men who in times of peace are looked upon as almost worthless characters."

May we not trust that :

" Those who live on amid our homes to dwell
Have grasped the higher lessons that endure " ?

In reference to Mr. Thomas Atkins, the British public is wont to blow hot and cold. When he is engaged in a popular war they are inclined to make a popular fool of him, talking as if it were rather wonderful, and not a matter of course, that he should

bear hardships uncomplainingly and not skulk in battle. When peace comes there are in some places of public resort as many snubs for him as before there had been sweets, pairs of socks, and other "comforts."

The following lines were cut by a soldier in a stone sentry-box at Gibraltar :

" God and the soldier all men adore
In time of trouble, and no more ;
For when war is over,
And all things righted,
God is neglected ;
And the old soldier slighted."

Let us hope that when this war is over God will not be neglected nor the soldier slighted.

The Author's profits from this book will be given for the benefit of soldiers.

CHAPTER I

UP TO SAMPLE

A MANUFACTURER is glad when he can supply goods up to sample, and we ought to be thankful that the old mixture of English, Scotch, Irish and Welsh sent to the war against Germany was as good as it ever was.

Lord Roberts said, "Our men have done wonderfully at the front, and I am proud of the British Army." Another old soldier, Lord Sydenham, told an audience that British troops had never shown finer qualities.

"Ah, Monsieur," said a French Staff Officer to an English friend, "without your Army we should have been lost. It proved that one volunteer is worth ten conscripts."

In the retreat from the Belgian frontier it was the small British Army that kept back at fearful loss the huge army of Germany, and by doing so enabled the French forces to fall back in safety.

One who was associated with the British at the beginning of this strategic retirement wrote: "I

have seen a crack cavalry regiment almost annihilated in a desperate charge against the German artillery. I have seen the heroic Scots mown down. Yet the British have already forgotten those tragic days when they alone bore the weight of the German onslaught. When in my presence those British soldiers were told of the disasters to their best regiments they never flinched. 'Never mind. We'll have the best of it one day,' was the invariable answer after a moment's silence."

Writing of the long resistance of our men against overwhelming odds in the region of Ypres, Sir John French said in his dispatches, "No more arduous task has ever been assigned to British soldiers, and in all their splendid history there is no instance of their having answered so magnificently to the desperate calls which of necessity were made upon them."

The accuracy of British artillery and infantry shooting surprised both our allies and the enemy. A French officer attached to one of our contingents was astonished at the coolness and ingenuity of our soldiers when under fire. He noted their good food and the celerity with which they made tea, cooked, washed and shaved when the enemy's fire slackened. He said that our aviators had mastered the technique of the new arm.

General Zurlinden wrote thus in *The Gaulois*:

"The British Army, which grows from day to day, has done miracles under Field-Marshal French. It shows in all engagements its incontestable superiority over the German infantry and artillery; as well as over the German cavalry."

There is a large body of German prisoners in the old fortress of Blaye, on the Gironde, and the French doctor told a friend that the first set of prisoners hastened to inform later arrivals that the English were fighting with the French against Germany. "This, however," they added, "is of no consequence whatever. The English soldiers are not worth taking into account." By-and-by other prisoners arrived, and the same story was repeated to them. They immediately protested. "You make a grievous mistake," they said, "if you believe that. The English soldiers are terrible fellows."

The following is a translation of a letter that was found on a dead German officer: "The English soldier is the best trained soldier in the world. The English soldier's fire is ten thousand times worse than hell. If we could only beat the English it would be well for us, but I am afraid we shall never be able to beat these English devils. They are very brave and fight to the last."

Even the Kaiser has found out that French's "Contemptible little Army" is like what the

nervous lady said of a mouse—"small, but a horrible nuisance."

The deeds of daring that were done in former British wars were repeated over and over in the present one. There were cavalry charges which can compare with that of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, only that nobody blundered. Almost every day a small number of our men kept multitudes of Germans at bay and got out of the tight corner at last. Guns were saved or taken with up-to-sample bravery. Wounded men were rescued by self-forgetting comrades who were often themselves wounded.

Here is an extract from a sergeant's letter printed in *The Evening News*: "When on the Monday morning we were compelled, reluctantly, to retire it was just as though we stood on parade at Woolwich. The line was as straight and steady as ever it was. I could not help thinking that here was an answer to the blatant ranters who are for ever prating about the degeneracy of our race."

Nor were our men afraid of the greater amount of work which up-to-date war entails. An officer mentioned having had during five days of a retreat, two hours of sleep and nineteen to twenty hours marching a day. "It was awful to see men with bad feet fall by the roadside; but I am glad our troops are still the British soldier of history, taking

everything that comes in a most philosophical and courageous manner. Lying in rain-soaked trenches for three days under a murderous and hellish fire, wet, hungry, merely provokes him to song and laughter.”

A corporal of the 16th Lancers wrote : “ We are in the saddle from 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. ; then off again at three next morning—not exactly playing billiards at the club.”

A sergeant-major was so worn out with marching that at the battle of Le Cateau he fell asleep and did not awake until his regiment, which had been in reserve, was ordered to engage. Some men with rifles still hot in their hands and their heads resting on the barrels slept “ the brave sleep of wearied men.”

In a letter from the front there was this passage : “ Our fellows have signed the pledge because Kitchener wants them to. But they all say, ‘ God help the Germans, when we get hold of them, for making us teetotal.’ You can get plenty of beer, but I would not disgrace myself with that, especially on active service.”

The French expected our soldiers to be fond of drink, but they found that they preferred tea to the free drinks of wine they offered.

The girls and women hung on the arms of the British and said that their only hope was in them.

The children played with them and the old people were cheered up by their songs and laughter as they marched through the villages. Mr. Thomas Atkins was as brave in resisting the temptations of this popularity as he was when he came, as he soon did, to his first battles.

The brave are always tender-hearted, and our soldiers were as humane and considerate to those whom they conquered as they were strong and courageous in conquering. After the battle the men with whom they had been fighting were no longer enemies. They were, if wounded, poor fellows to be pitied and helped.

And our men were generous in their appreciation. One man wrote : " In spite of all we say about the Teuton he is taking his punishment well, and we've got a big job on our hands. Getting to Berlin isn't going to be a cheap excursion."

CHAPTER II

COURAGE

WHAT is courage or fortitude? There are many kinds of it, but Locke's definition covers most cases. "It is the quiet possession of a man's self, and an undisturbed doing of his duty, whatever evil beset him, or danger lie in his way."

There are those who have courage to fight, but not to wait. Where duty says, "Go forward," to halt or to go in any other direction is cowardice; where duty says, "Stand still," to go forward is cowardice. Our soldiers have shown themselves capable of both kinds of courage. At the battle of Mons they were brave enough to retreat when ordered, though they were driving the Germans before them at the point of the bayonet. They said that they could not understand why the order to retreat was given, but they trusted their leaders.

"Tommy Atkins, you're a fighter,
An' your work is clean and sweet—

THE BRITISH SOLDIER

When you've got a job before you,
Why you goes an' does it neat;
Tommy Atkins, you're a hero,
With your 'masterly retreat!'

"Tommy Atkins, you're a Saxon,
An' you're bloomin' hard to beat,
And you've borne the brunt o' fightin'
And you've kept upon your feet—
An' you've learned the precious lesson
Of a 'masterly retreat!'

"Tommy Atkins, you're a soldier,
An' your work is clean and sweet,
An' you've won a dozen battles
By a nicely-timed defeat—
Tommy Atkins, you're a hero,
With your 'masterly retreat'!"

"Ah," said a French officer, "we lose so heavily, we French. We haven't the patience of the English. They are fine and can wait: we must rush."

But indeed the very constancy of the courage of our soldiers may sometimes hide it. We take it for granted. We become so accustomed to read of the coolness of Mr. Thomas Atkins amidst a hail of bullets, that we begin to fancy that with a good umbrella we would be equally indifferent to the shower. Is courage then natural, and are all men brave? Quite the contrary. What is natural is an instinctive desire to save life and

limb, and those who overcome this from a sense of duty ought to get credit for doing so.

How courage creates courage is told by a Connaught Ranger. Writing of a man who had carried him away through a storm of bullets when wounded he said, "He is a grand lad and afraid of nothing. He gave all who were near him courage by his brave conduct."

There are many kinds and degrees of courage. There is that which is calm, deliberate and with little or no hope of reward.

A magnificent manifestation of this courage was given by twelve Royal Engineers. A bridge on the British line of retreat had to be destroyed. A party of sappers laid a charge; but before they could light the fuse they were killed. Then one of the Engineers made a rush, alone, towards the fuse. He was killed before he had got half-way, but immediately he was down another man dashed up and ran on until he, too, fell dead, almost over the body of his comrade. A third, a fourth, a fifth attempted to run the gauntlet of the German rifle fire, and all of them met their deaths in the same way. Others dashed out after them, one by one, until the death toll numbered eleven. Then, for an instant, the German rifle fire slackened, and in that instant the bridge was blown up, for the twelfth man, racing across the space where

the dead bodies of his comrades lay, lit the fuse and sent the bridge up with a roar as a German rifleman brought him down dead.

A few British soldiers held at bay a large number of Germans who were trying to rush a bridge. A Sergeant of the Royal Engineers perceived that if they did this our men would be cut off. He destroyed the bridge with dynamite, the British troops were saved, but a shell took off the Sergeant's head.

With the modesty of a real hero Lance-Corporal Jarvis, R.E., said to a newspaper reporter: "Yes, I am proud to have gained the Cross, but all the fellows at the front deserve it." Jarvis got the Victoria Cross for gallantry shown at Genappes on August 23rd in working for one and a half hours under heavy fire, in full view of the enemy, and in successfully firing charges for the demolition of a bridge. "The work on the bridge was done under fire from three sides. Near the bridge I found Captain Theodore Wright, V.C., wounded in the head. I wished to bandage him, but he said, 'Go back to the bridge; it must be done'—and so I went. The British infantry were posted behind barricades, and I had to make quite a detour to get round where I had to start operations."

"Good-bye, you fellows." Thirty gunners of

a British field battery had just been killed and wounded. Thirty others had been ordered to take their places. Knowing they were going to their death, this was the last greeting to their comrades in the reserve line. Two minutes afterwards every man had been put out of action, and another thirty went to the front, with the same farewell greeting, smoking cigarettes as they went to almost certain death.

A pathetic picture was presented when a British Red Cross shelter was being shelled, and the less wounded men carried the more wounded to a place of comparative safety.

Some almost mad things were done by men in the trenches, in the intervals of coolly playing games.

A man stole forth on a dark night to carry off a German maxim. He wriggled on his stomach to within a few yards of his object. He surprised the guard of five Prussians, slew them, and returned in triumph to his trench with the maxim slung like a sheep across his shoulders. Rendered brazen by his success he sallied forth again to collect the ammunition and belt which he had left behind on his first journey.

One day the Gloucesters were lying under shell fire, and a shell dropped right in the middle of a party having some food. It did not explode at

once, so one of the men dropped his biscuit, got up and threw the shell out of the trenches.

A sergeant of the Royal Horse Artillery who had come back from the war for a rest, was asked if there were many men getting the Victoria Cross. He replied : " Of course there are, but every fellow who has fought has in some way or other earned it. Why, our little trumpeter, had he been saving a wounded man under the same conditions as he collared a chicken for his comrades' dinner, would have certainly obtained the coveted Cross. We were being shelled and fired on fiercely when a chicken suddenly ran into a very inferno of fire. ' There goes our dinner ! ' cried the trumpeter, and without another word he chased the bird for at least five minutes, never worrying a little bit about the shells and bullets. Finally he came back with a bullet in his leg, but as proud as the Kaiser himself, with the chicken in his arms."

Compare with this the following, written by Sergeant George Freshwater, of the Highland Light Infantry : " The other day one of our fellows shot a pig that came wandering towards our trench. The difficulty was, however, to get him. The pig lay about 30 yards from us, and was right in the line of the German fire. Some of the Germans also shot at him, but it was our chaps who killed him. We drew lots who would go out and fetch the

'bacon' in. The chap who was stuck for the job went out at once, though some of us wanted him to wait until it got dark, but he wouldn't. He got the pig in safely, though he got two shots through his sleeve and one through his cap. The pig got six shots in him. We skinned and roasted the pig in the trench that night, and had a real good breakfast off him the next morning."

A man crept up to a German trench and took away from a sleeping warrior a helmet, knapsack, a pair of patent-leather boots (evidently looted), and forty-five rounds of ammunition.

A soldier wrote : "There was a big, awkward, gawky lad of the Camerons who took a fancy to a Scotch collie that had followed us about a lot, and one day the dog got left behind when we were falling back. The big lad was terribly upset and went back to look for it. He found it, and was trudging along with it in his arms, making forced marches to overtake us, when he fell in with a party of Uhlans on the prowl. He and his dog fought their best, but they hadn't a dog's chance between them, and both were killed."

"A man of the 'Glosters' noticed a horse that had been struck with a shell and was in great pain, and was neighing piteously for water. There was none about, and with the Germans rapidly closing in it was as much as any man's life was worth to

stay another minute. The brave chap knew that as well as anyone, but he wanted to make the poor animal comfortable before he cleared off, so he hunted around until he found water. We had to clear out, and didn't know what had happened to him until next day when we retook the position, and found the Gloucester lad and horse both dead."

The highest courage comes from forgetting self and caring for the welfare of others.

This was told by a corporal of an Irish regiment. "We were in a place near Rheims and a Britisher dashed out from a farmhouse on the right and ran towards us. The Germans fired and he fell dead. We learned that he had been captured the previous day by a party of German cavalry, and had been held a prisoner at the farm, where the Germans were in ambush for us. He saw their game, and, though he knew that if he made the slightest sound they would kill him, he decided to make a dash to warn us of what was in store."

It was not enough for our men to show courage on land and sea ; they now do so also in the air. At one time it was thought that the Germans excelled in this new kind of warfare, and that their Kaiser was "the Prince of the power of the air." Now the French and British have successfully disputed this ascendancy.

The men of the Royal Flying Corps are not

"afraid of that which is high." " Fired at constantly both by friend and foe," Sir John French writes, "and not hesitating to fly in every kind of weather, they have remained undaunted throughout."

John Baker, Royal Flying Corps, told the following in a letter home : " While flying over Boulogne at a height of 3,000 feet something went wrong with the machine, and the engine stopped. The officer said, ' Baker, our time has come. Be brave, and die like a man. Good-bye,' and shook hands with me. The next I remembered was that I was in a barn."

Another new opportunity for courage is given by the work of the motor-cycle despatch-rider. There is in it adventure, danger, hardship and every other element of romance. The despatch-rider has to take his machine over rough fields and roads made dangerous by shell holes. He has often experiences as bad as the one which Lance-Corporal Davies, of the Welsh Fusiliers, thus describes : " I had to accompany one of the sergeants in carrying a despatch across the battlefield under fire. We had not gone far before the sergeant was shot dead. I took the despatch from his keeping with all haste, and made at top speed for the staff officers for whom it was intended. As I delivered the despatch I dropped into a dead faint from exhaustion, and

when I came round I found myself in the field hospital."

The despatch-rider has to pass sentries who shoot at sight, and sometimes he has to go through even the lines of the enemy.

CHAPTER III

COURAGE AND DISCIPLINE

BEFORE the last Boer War British Army officers did not take their profession as seriously as did Continental military men. A regiment was a club and many came into it merely to have a good time.

After the lessons of the Boer War all this changed. Zeal and energy took hold of our officers and they began to think that they were bound in honour to make themselves efficient. And they have done so.

The rank and file know this, and respect them for it. One soldier ended a letter with these words: "We are officered by excellent men, and we feel that we are being led. Their coolness when in a tight corner had a great effect upon the men and pulled us through often." In one of his letters at the beginning of the war a sergeant of the Buffs remarked, "It is wonderful, with all they have to do, how helpful and kind the officers are. They know their work to their finger tips. If some of you at home who have spoken sneeringly of British officers could have seen how they handled their men and

shirked nothing you would be ashamed of yourselves."

The other day Lord Raglan, Lieutenant-Governor of the Isle of Man, related an incident which shows what a soldier will do for his officer. He said that his son, who is a lieutenant in the Welsh Regiment, was seriously wounded in Belgium, and that a private soldier first bound up the wound, and then said, "They shall not hit you again, sir." He then lay down in front of his wounded officer so that his own body would protect him from the fire of the enemy.

An officer of the Manchester Regiment was equally self-sacrificing for a soldier. Lieutenant W. G. Mansergh was hit in the leg at Le Cateau. Falling near an empty trench he crawled into it and was comparatively safe. Shortly after a soldier of the same regiment crawled up to the same trench. Mansergh pulled him in and got the man underneath him (it was a short "two-man trench" for kneeling). Mansergh was now exposed to shrapnel, though still protected by the trench parapet from rifle fire. A shell burst just in front of the trench low down. Mansergh was killed on the spot.

An officer wrote, "You cannot imagine how one gets to love these soldier chaps. The other day they found an egg which they wanted me to have. Of course I wouldn't, but offered to cut for it (we

have got a pack of cards). In the end it was given to a woman we met. They are just like children in the way they look up to one and ask one for advice and counsel on all kinds of subjects, great or small. Although I say it myself, I don't think they could put more confidence in their officers than they do at times like these, and I think most of us appreciate the fact."

Private Walker, of the 1st Cameronians, wrote in a letter to his mother: "I asked an officer for some tobacco, and he gave me some of what he had been smoking, laughingly remarking, 'It's Cavendish.' It was just leaves pulled off the trees, so hard up were we for tobacco."

What a contrast there is between the discipline of the German and the British Army! In the former officers and men are almost in the same relation to each other as warders and convicts. The officers drive their men and do not lead them, and dumb, driven cattle cannot be heroes in the strife. German officers think of their men only as "cannon fodder," ours associate with them in games during peace time, and in war share all their hardships. It was this "moral persuasion" discipline that so often enabled our small army to knock the tail-feathers out of the Kaiser's eagle.

A corporal of the 1st Cameronians wrote: "Thank Heaven our officers are not like German officers.

Ours are the best in the world. ‘Come on, lads !’ is the way they cheer us, and the boys know how to obey.”

This war has shown that there never was in our Army more of that best kind of discipline which comes from officers and men being in friendly touch with each other. A man who was lying in a place where shells were exploding, said to his officer, “Sir, may I retire, I have been hit three times ?”

The following are some of the testimonies which men returned from the war gave as to the good feeling that exists between our officers and their men.

This is from a corporal’s letter : “ Our officers are grand and they cheer our men by their laughter and jokes in the trenches. They are gluttons for work, and are always cheerful, cool, and quick to see and seize any chance of delivering a punishing blow at any part of the enemy’s lines. The only complaint against them is that they will not take cover, but expose themselves too much. The Boer War lesson they teach to the men, but won’t profit by it themselves.”

Describing the fighting at Mons, a sergeant of the Royal Berkshire Regiment said : “ Captain Shott, D.S.O., of our regiment, was, I think, the bravest man I ever met. On August 23rd, when we were near — and were lying in our trenches with shell

fire constantly around us, he walked out into the open and, with his cheery words, gave us good heart. He was puffing a cigarette and he said, 'Lads, we will smoke.' He was an officer and a gentleman in every sense of the word, and when he was killed two days later it was a great blow to us."

"Captain Berners, of the Irish Guards," wrote one of his men, "was the life and soul of our lot. When shells were bursting over our heads, he would buck us up with his humour about Brock's displays at the Palace. But when we got into close quarters, it was he who was in the thick of it, and didn't he fight! I don't know how he got knocked over, but one of our fellows told me he died a game 'un.' There is not a Tommy who would not have gone under for him."

We read of an officer of the 1st Hampshire Regiment reading "Marmion" aloud in the trenches, under a fierce fire, to keep up the spirits of his men. "He is as cool as a slab of salmon in a fishmonger's shop. He is a top-hole chap and worshipped by his men."

Writing of the terrible fire of the German artillery at the Marne, a soldier said: "All we could do was to keep on firing. Our officer stood up in the trenches and clapped his hands like as if he was clappin' a star turn at the Empire. 'Good boys!' he yelled. 'Good boys, stick to it!' That was all

he said. The next moment a piece of shell crumpled him up. His death was a terrible blow to us. He did not know what fear is, and shared everything from a biscuit to a cigarette with his men."

So, too, a guardsman wrote : "There is not a man in the whole Brigade of Guards but what would readily admit that all the hardships the men have endured have been shared by the officers."

I read the following from a corporal's letter in *The Daily Chronicle* : "Our Major (Mathieson) was a hero. When we were hard pressed and they charged our weak line, we were almost on the point of retiring, but he stood up in the midst of the fire and shouted, 'Never let it be said that a Coldstreamer retired in front of a German dog.' After that we were all as one man and never flinched."

A subaltern was heard to say in his sleep, "This position must be held at any cost." This showed his zeal and the tension of his overworked nerves.

A battalion, full strength, went into the trenches. They stayed there day after day without relief, resisting overwhelming forces which were trying to drive them out. At last the time for relief came. They came out of the trenches, but only a fourth of those who had gone into them, and they came out under the command of one who had become their senior officer, a boy of nineteen. When they came out he formed up his men. He gave them the order

to march, and then he burst into tears, and fell fainting to the ground. While duty required it he had done all that was wanted of him, but when it was over the strain was too much, and he broke down.

An officer said to his men, "Surely British soldiers can keep back any amount of German waiters." The men said that they were "bucked up" by this way of putting it.

In a letter to his wife, Private McKay, of the 2nd Highland Light Infantry, wrote: "The Highland Light Infantry, the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, the Worcester Regiment, and the Connaught Rangers have beaten all records for marching by doing 190 miles in eight and a half days, and at the same time fighting rearguard actions day after day. When on the march the men have been so run down that they feel like falling down, but our officers help them on with a few words, such as 'Come on, men! Think of the honour of the regiment.' That does it. They all start singing, 'Hold your hand out, naughty boy!' and feel fit for another 10 or 15 miles."

Another soldier wrote to his parents: "I have often told you what a fine fellow our captain was. He got knocked over with a piece of shell; but kneeling on one knee, he was cheerful, and kept saying, 'My bonnie boys, make sure of your man.'



When he was taken away in the ambulance he shouted, 'Keep cool and mark your man.' To his men he was always a gentleman."

Bandsman Imeson, 4th Middlesex Regiment, wrote this about his officer, Lieutenant Williams : " He was a hero. When in the trenches he would expose himself to danger so as to take good aim with his rifle, although we frequently requested him to get under cover. His answer was, ' Look at the bounders, men ; don't waste a shot ; take careful aim, so that each shot tells.' It was while he was taking aim that he was shot through the stomach, and later died. His last words were, ' Men, give it them.' "

Another soldier in a letter said that he nearly cried when he saw his captain shot. " He has been so good to us."

Big strapping troopers of the Horse Guards are said to have " cried like kids " when their Major fell in action. " If you knew how much we loved that man you would understand."

A soldier thus wrote, who had been asked to tell General A. Wynn about his son's death at Landrecies :

" Sir, these are a few of the instances which made your son liked by all his men. The last day he was alive we had got a cup of tea in the trenches, and we asked him to have a drink. He said, ' No.

Drink it yourselves ; you are in want of it.' And then with a smile, he added, ' We have to hold the trenches to-day.' Again, at Mons, we had been fighting all day, and someone brought a sack of pears and two loaves of bread. Lieutenant Wynn accepted only one pear and a very little bread. We noticed this. I had a small bottle of pickles in my haversack and asked him to have some. But it was the usual answer : ' You require them yourselves.' Our regiment was holding the first line of trenches, and Lieutenant Wynn was told to hold the right of the company. Word was passed down to see if Lieutenant Wynn was all right, and I was just putting up my head when they hit me, and I heard from a neighbour that Lieutenant Wynn was hit through the eye and died instantly. He died doing his duty, and like the officer and gentleman he was."

Officers and men were always on the watch to help each other. At the battle of Mons an officer stood over the body of a private who had previously saved his life until he had fired his last shot from his revolver, and then fell seriously wounded. A private soldier carried on his back for 800 yards a young subaltern, who afterwards died in hospital.

Trooper O'Brien, of the 3rd Dragoons, told in a letter to his wife how Captain Wright, of his squadron, crept out under a heavy artillery and rifle fire to

try and bring in two wounded men. "He brought one back to the trench and bandaged up and placed in safety the other. He is a lovely man, and I and every other man in my squadron would follow him anywhere to the death."

A private wrote: "Officers seem to be mainly concerned about the safety of their men, and indifferent to the risks they take upon themselves. Lieutenant Amos rescued a wounded man under heavy fire. Several of us volunteered to do it, but the lieutenant would not hear of anybody else taking the risk."

Private R. Toomey, Royal Army Medical Corps, told of an officer of the Royal Irish shouting at the top of his voice, "Give them hell, boys, give them hell!" He had been wounded in the back by a lump of shrapnel, but, said Toomey, "It was a treat to hear him shouting."

Because of a foolish affair in Ulster, Ireland, our Army not so long ago was said to be insubordinate. What answer has the war given to this? It has shown that officers and men never worked better together, and that the educated, temperate soldier of the present fights just as well as did his predecessor, whose mind was too uncultivated to realise danger, and who was not unfrequently blinded to it by drink.

How well the officers managed their men when

they were sore and disappointed at the order to retreat after the battle of Mons ! A General told the South Staffordshire Regiment that they were doing splendidly, but that they must retreat or they would be surrounded. They were all so unwilling to yield ground that one of them, expressing impatience, made a comment he would never have thought of doing in peace time. The General only smiled.

At St. Quentin Sir John French, "smiling all over his face," explained to the troops the meaning of the repeated retirements. Up to this the men had almost to be pulled back by their officers, but after the explanation they fell in cheerfully with that most hated thing—a strategic movement to the rear.

The men were pleased by Sir John and his staff going among them to see their life in the trenches, and whether they were being properly looked after. "He has no 'side,' and is just as ready to smile on the ordinary private as on the highest officer. He stops when he has time to have a chat for the sake of finding out what we think of it all, and whether we are properly looked after."

The spirit which animates our officers, and the men through them, is shown by words written by Captain Norman Leslie a short time before he was killed : " Try and not worry too much about the

war units. Individuals cannot count. Remember we are writing a new page of history. Future generations cannot be allowed to read of the decline of the British Empire and attribute it to us. We live our little lives and die, and to some are given the choice of proving themselves men, and to others no chance comes. Whatever our individual faults, virtues, or qualities may be, it matters not; but when we are up against big things let us forget individuals and let us act as one great British unit, united and fearless. Some will live and many will die, but count not the loss. It is better far to go out with honour than survive with shame."

CHAPTER IV

BOYS OF THE BULLDOG BREED

A BUGLER only sixteen years of age was, on returning from the war, being taken to the Royal Herbert Hospital at Woolwich. One of the soldiers said to the people who were looking on, "He is a little hero, and deserves a dozen medals. He did not leave off sounding his bugle until his left arm was blown off with a shell and he had four bullet wounds in him."

Another boy of the bull-dog breed, who is a trumpeter, did this heroic deed. A British battery had lost all its horses and all its men except a lieutenant and a trumpeter. By one of the guns lay the sergeant-major, wounded in the leg and shoulder, and the lad decided that he would make an attempt to take him out of the line of fire. His officer tried to dissuade him, declaring that it was sheer madness, in face of the awful shell fire that was pouring like rain all round that spot. The lad, however, was determined, and, getting hold of a spare horse from the rear, galloped off to where the wounded sergeant-major lay, picked him up, placed him

across his saddle, and brought him safely to the hospital.

The great complaint our cavalry had against that of the enemy was that they would not stand and have a respectable charge against them.

A party of Royal Marines were going by train from Antwerp to Ostend. At 10 o'clock at night the train was stopped and the Marines were fired at by Germans from all directions. The officer in command was asked to surrender. He replied, "Royal Marines never surrender." The no-surrender boys fought their way through, though they lost many of their number.

Great was the pain that an order to retreat gave to other boys of the bulldog breed. While the British were gaining a series of great successes, the French were being defeated on the right. They were unable to hold the Germans. The British were ordered to fall back in order that they might not be enveloped by the Germans and completely cut off. When the order came, the men became almost rebellious. "Stalwart members of the Scottish and Irish regiments wept."

The men, however, as it proved, got even more opportunity of showing courage in the retreat than they did not, at the time, understand. "My story," says the *New York World* correspondent, "principally concerns the bulldog-like resistance of the

British troops against the constant ferocious attacks by the Germans holding the centre of the far-flung line, while the French troops were engaged in pushing back the right flank of the Germans. Official statements conveyed but an incomplete idea of the tremendous undertaking of the British and French troops."

" If there be truth behind the splendid boast
That freedom makes of every man a host
And multiplies his courage and his might
Above the strength of peoples without right
To liberty ; now is the hour to show
The universe how Britain meets the foe."

The following incidents have been mentioned in despatches : During the action at Le Cateau on August 26th the whole of the officers and men of one of the British batteries had been killed or wounded, with the exception of one subaltern and two gunners. These continued to serve one gun, kept up a sound rate of fire, and came unhurt from the battlefield.

On another occasion a portion of a supply column was cut off by a detachment of German cavalry, and the officer in charge was summoned to surrender. He refused, and starting his motors off at full speed dashed safely through, losing only two lorries.

It is no wonder that a French officer said that British soldiers were always " le bulldog. We did not know that they could fight as they do, nor did the Germans. You cannot wear out their spirits :

even if you walk them off their legs they will crawl somehow, they will never stop."

Writing about his soldiers after the battle of the Aisne, a British officer used these words : " There is an extraordinary English atmosphere over the whole show. I mean that the men display a dogged, obstinate resistance in the face of any odds and absolutely refuse to consider the possibility of their being beaten. They won't admit at any time that the Germans have got the best of them. Their cheerfulness is extraordinary and nothing is able to depress them."

The following account of part of the same battle illustrates the above remark : " The Engineers built a pontoon bridge across the river. They were under shell fire all the time, but they stuck to the work gamely. Luckily the shells dropped in the river, and did not explode. The order was given to cross the bridge man by man, six yards between each man. It was a race across under fire. I saw men getting ready for their turn, as if it were a hundred yards sprint and the officer giving the word to the next man : ' Go.' It was an exciting time, and lots of men fell in the river and were drowned. I ran the race of my life, but I got over safely. We advanced up a side of a hill, as the river was down a valley, and when we got on top it was all open country, and the Germans held a position on the hills in front of us, and their infantry

had trenches just below them. Their shells started to drop on us. We advanced a bit. We were getting slaughtered. We lay down flat on our stomachs. They were well in the trenches, and we could see they meant to make a stand. We lay there helpless against their artillery. The shells ceased a while, and their infantry tried to rush us, but as soon as they left their trenches our rifle fire played hell with them. They were trying to rush us, but we drove them back time after time. My rifle I could hardly hold, as it was red-hot with the continual firing. It was raining all the time, and we were lying in water. I had to keep dropping my rifle and wet my hands on the ground. We could not move an inch. The shells started again. It was like waiting to be killed. It was miserable lying in wet. We lay there for four days, getting biscuits and bully beef at night, when the supplies used to creep up to us at the risk of their lives."

Another instance of bulldog resistance was thus recorded : " At one place we had a surprise attack. We were just getting ready for some food, when all of a sudden shells started bursting around us. I can tell you, it was a case of being up and doing. Dixies and tea-cans were flung one side, our tea spilt, fires put out, and the order given to stand to our guns and horses ; everyone to prepare for action. Still, we were not to be caught napping. Our boys only

close one eye when we get a chance of a sleep, so you can tell we were wide awake to the fact that it was a case of do or die. Our gallant boys, the Guards, held them at bay until our death-dealing peashooters put them to flight; nevertheless, the Germans made a strong resistance during the night, and it was only after a hard struggle that we managed to be victorious."

How the Coldstream Guards saved a division of British troops is told by one of them: "The Germans were in tremendous numbers, easily sufficient to swamp us. We had chosen the position very carefully, and our flanks were protected by barbed-wire defences. The enemy suffered fearful losses along that narrow strip of road, but they never relaxed their efforts to take the place by storm. So fierce was the fighting that the Germans did manage once to capture one of our machine guns, but they did not keep it long—we soon had it back. Rush after rush came during the night, but our lads held fast. The German big guns were very troublesome. One of them was a particular danger, and the order came to one of the machine gunners to try to scrap it. 'Yes, sir, what range?' 'Four hundred yards,' came the reply. The gunner adapted his machine, and let drive. One shot was sufficient. It got the German gun right in the breech, and it did not bark again that night. The engagement proceeded all

night. A huge German force was held up by a comparative handful of British soldiers, while the latter's main body was able to extricate itself from a most precarious position."

A soldier of the 1st Queen's described this case of bulldog resistance: "On September 17th we were supporting the Northamptons, who were hotly engaged with the enemy. The Germans threw up their hands, and the Northants ceased to press home the attack. As they approached, however, instead of surrendering, the Germans opened a withering fire, and the Northants were compelled to retire. Their danger was recognised by Colonel Warren, whose machine-gun section was disabled. He himself served a gun, assisted by his adjutant, and helped to pour in a heavy fire on the Germans, who suffered severely. Both officers paid for their gallantry with their lives. A shrapnel shell from a German gun burst over them, their gun was shattered, and Colonel Warren and Captain Wilson were instantaneously killed."

A soldier related how when unable to sleep one night with the cold of the trenches the regiment wished for some warming work and got it. "We were called out to support an infantry brigade. During the action at one point the line broke, and our lads fell back in some confusion. Reserves were pressed forward to feed the fighting line, and the

advance began again. Once more the Germans were too heavy for our chaps, and again they were forced back. They halted for a little to take a rest and then began again. They dashed up the slope like wild cats and closed with the Germans, who were by this time getting tired of it. There was no falling back this time, and though it was very hard work indeed, the whole line of trenches was cleared and the Germans sent flying. I tell you that it is so terrible in the trenches at times, that we mutter through our chattering teeth prayers to Almighty God only to give the Germans sufficient grace to make them come out and attack us, just to warm us up and give us the exercise our aching limbs are crying out for."

After relating how his regiment at one place held its ground to the last, a soldier proudly added : " General French has thanked us for the way we behaved, and praise from him is worth a great deal more than from other men. He is not in a hurry to say nice things about us, but when he does speak we know he means every word of it, and maybe more. That's the way to get round the soldiers."

CHAPTER V

FACING FEARFUL ODDS

THIS is how some twenty-six British soldiers faced 3,500 Germans after the evacuation of Mons. The British forces reluctantly retreated. As they were only giving ground step by step, twenty-six Fusiliers entrenched themselves in a farm overlooking a long, straight road. They were in possession of several machine guns and these they placed inside the doors of the farm house. "Now, boys," shouted one of the twenty-six, "we are going to cinematograph the grey devils when they come along. This is going to be Coronation Day. Let each of us take as many pictures as possible." As soon as the Germans appeared on the road and started attacking a canal bridge the Fusiliers very coolly turned the handle of their guns.

The picture witnessed from the farm on the "living screen" by the canal bridge was one that will not easily be forgotten. The "grey devils" dropped down in hundreds. Again and again they came on only to get more machine murder. At

length they thought that it was wiser to continue their march and leave alone the twenty-six who had for a considerable time delayed it.

A well-known Member of Parliament, when visiting a locality in France where there had been much fighting, came to a lonely wood. Around a large tree were significant mounds enclosed by a palisade on which were hanging laurel wreaths. On a part of the tree from which the bark had been stripped was a rude inscription: "Here lie the bodies of twenty English heroes." This was a German tribute to our countrymen, who had fought to the last against overwhelming odds. The enemy admiring their bravery, had buried them and left this record. A company of French soldiers passing through the wood later on saw it. They stayed to erect the palisade to guard the graves, and upon it they hung twenty laurel wreaths.

One of the Lancashire Fusiliers when left behind at Mons continued to fire until his last cartridge was gone. His bayonet was also gone, so he stood up with folded arms until he was shot down.

Here is how the brigade to which the Welsh regiment belonged faced fearful odds.

"'The contemptible little Army' were opposed by 300,000 Germans. Our brigade got a position that, had the enemy made a dash at us, we should have been overwhelmed. Had they had the pluck

they could have come over a ridge and mowed us down, for we were all in a valley, but our General knew we were safe from any attack in the open. All they did was to keep up a terrible artillery fire. Shrapnel shells were bursting over us, but amid all this we took heed of only one word, 'Advance,' and advance we did. Our regiment had a centre position. On we all went. We neared the crest of the hill behind which was our goal. About twenty yards from the crest we lay down and our company commander, Captain Haggard, advanced to the top, saw the Germans and then shouted, 'Fix bayonets, boys, here they are.' What an officer! What a soldier! He himself used a rifle. We 'fixed' and were prepared to follow him anywhere, but we were checked by a storm of maxim fire. We knew by the sound that we were up against a tremendous force. There was only one game to play now—bluff them into the belief that we were as strong as themselves, so we were ordered 'rapid firing,' which gives an enemy the impression that the firing force is strong. We popped away like this for three hours, never moving an inch from our position, and our officers standing up to locate the enemy every now and again. We lost four officers in about twenty minutes. Men were getting hit, bullets coming at us from our front and both flanks, Still we hung on. Just near me was lying our brave captain

mortally wounded. As the shells burst over us he would occasionally open his eyes, so full of pain, and call out—but 'twas very weak—'Stick it, Welsh Regiment, stick it, Welsh.' Many of us wounded managed to crawl up and down the firing line 'dishing out' the ammunition we were unable to use. So our lads stuck at it until our artillery got into action. We won. Out in that field were strewn thousands and thousands of German dead and wounded. They even piled them up and made barricades of their dead. Towards dusk, though we were still exposed to terrible shell fire, and to move was almost courting suicide, several of our lads volunteered to collect and carry away the wounded. Many got hit in doing so, but they cared nothing. We were taken to a little farmhouse to wait for the field ambulance wagons. Officers were telling us yarns, were sending everywhere for milk and resolutely refused to be bandaged until we were seen to."

A wounded private of the Royal Munster Fusiliers told the following story of fighting when the regiment had to bear the brunt of the whole German attack, while the rest of the brigade fell back: "They came at us from all points—horse, foot, artillery, and all, and the air was thick with screaming, shouting men waving swords and blazing away at us like blue murder. Our lads stood up to them

without the least taste of fear, and when their cavalry came down on us we received them with fixed bayonets in front, the rear ranks firing away as steadily as you please. All round us we saw them collecting until there was hardly a hole fit for a wee mouse to get through, and then it was that the hardest fight of all took place, for we wouldn't surrender, and tried our hardest to cut through the stone wall of the Germans.

"It was hell's own work, but we never hoisted the white flag. One of our men has been recommended for the Distinguished Service Medal. When the man—who was working the machine gun—was killed he came up and took his place. Then the gun was smashed altogether, and his hand blown off with a shell."

The nickname of the regiment is "Dirty Shirts," and because of their heavy losses on this occasion it was said that the Germans had cleaned up the "Dirty Shirts." "Well," said an indignant Fusilier, "it was a moighty expensive washin' for them, anny way."

One of the Irish Dragoon Guards carried a wounded trooper to a farmhouse under fire. A German patrol called at the house and found them. From behind a barrier the Dragoons kept the Germans at bay. The Germans then brought a machine gun up and threatened to destroy the house. Rather

than bring suffering on their hosts or the village the two hunted men made a rush out with some mad idea, perhaps, of taking the gun that had been brought against them. They got no further than the threshold of the door, where they fell dead, their blood bespattering the walls of the house.

The 4th Royal Fusiliers were in a warm corner. They were being fired at by outnumbering artillery and infantry, and they were, as one of them said, "like a lot of schoolboys at a treat" when ordered to fix bayonets and charge. "We had about 200 yards to cover before we got near them, and then we let them have it. It put us in mind of tossing hay, only we had human bodies. I was separated from my neighbours and was on my own when I was attacked by three Germans. I had a lively time and was nearly done when a comrade came to my rescue. I had already made sure of two, but the third would have finished me. I already had about three inches of steel in my side when my chum finished him."

The special correspondent of *The Daily Mail* told the following. One hundred and fifty Highlanders were detailed to hold a bridge over the river Aisne. The Germans opened fire from the woods around, and another body of them greatly outnumbering the Highlanders rushed towards the bridge. For a time they were kept at bay. Then

the maxim gun belonging to the little force ceased its fire, for the whole of its crew had been killed, and the gun stood there on its tripod silent, amid a ring of dead bodies. A Highlander ran forward under the bullet storm, seized the maxim, slung tripod and all on to his back, and carried it at a run across the exposed bridge to the far side facing the German attack. The belt of the gun was still charged, and there, absolutely alone, the soldier sat down in full view of the enemy, and opened a hail of bullets upon the advancing column. Under the tempest of fire the column wavered, and then broke. Almost the moment after the Highlander fell dead beside his gun.

In a night attack upon the Worcester Regiment the Germans used the bayonet, which they seldom did, and it was far from a success for them, though there were great masses of them. "We gave them," said a sergeant of the Worcesters, "one terrible volley, but nothing could have stopped the ferocious impetus of their attack. For one terrible moment our ranks bent under the dead weight, but the Germans, too, wavered, and in that moment we gave them the bayonet, and hurled them back in disorder. The Germans have the numbers ; we have the men."

At Ypres our Army had to face and hold in check 250,000 Germans for five days. In addition to the ordinary shell and shrapnel there were shells from

heavy siege guns brought from Antwerp. These churned up the earth in the trenches and often buried our men who lay there. Over and over again masses of the enemy's infantry advanced within a few hundred yards. Then they halted and poured in a volley. They had no relish for a bayonet charge. Over and over again men leapt from the trenches and went at them with the bayonet. They fled, firing their rifles over their shoulders as they ran. Many hundreds were captured, and thousands were mown down with shell, with rifle, and machine-gun fire. Still their shell and shrapnel rained upon our trenches. Fresh infantry were brought up. The situation became critical ; it seemed as if our men would be overcome by sheer weight of numbers. Still they held on until the fifth day, when relief came and the position was saved.

CHAPTER VI

FIGHTS TO A FINISH

THOSE were stirring words which the Colonel of the Manchester Regiment addressed to his men when they were surprised at Douai by very superior numbers: "No surrender, lads! First you have your rifles, then your bayonets, then the butts of your rifles, then your fists!"

Even with their fists our soldiers, on one occasion, made the Germans pay for their treachery. "They attacked our position in very strong numbers, but we kept them at bay until they played a trick on us that cost us dear, but not so dear as it cost themselves. They got to two hundred yards of our trenches, then the fire was so hot for them that they hoisted the white flag. Of course we stopped firing, and some got up to go out and take them prisoners, but as soon as they got up to them they opened a pitiless fire on our fellows. For a moment our chaps were taken by surprise, but it was the sight of a lifetime to see them a moment later. Straight into the German masses they sprang, and with their

bayonets, butts of their rifles, and even their fists, they set about them. The slaughter was terrible. Soon the Germans had had enough of Tommy Atkins when his temper is roused. They broke and fled in utter disorder. You ought to have heard them yell ; it was like a wild beast show let loose."

A company of the Middlesex Regiment were also handy with their fists. Alas ! these were not sufficient. They were digging trenches near Mons when a mass of Germans, who seemed to come from nowhere, bore down upon them. Bayonets in hand, they rushed upon our men, who were quite unprepared in the matter of equipment, but the sergeant of the company set the lead by the use of his fists, and "downed two Germans with two successive blows." The whole company followed their sergeant's lead, but they were mowed down like grass.

Here is a typical Irish description from a Munster Fusilier : "The Germans seem to think that you can catch Irish soldiers with fly-papers, for they just stepped up the other day and called on us to surrender, as bold as you like and bolder. We didn't waste any words in telling them to go about their business, but we just grabbed hold of our bayonets and signed to them to come on if they wanted anything, but they didn't seem in any great hurry to meet us. After a bit they opened fire on us with a couple of maxims, but we fixed bayonets and went

for the guns with a rush. They appear to be delicate boys indeed, and can't stand very much rough usage with the bayonet. We got their guns. Their cavalry had a try at getting them back later on, but we let them have it with bayonet and rifle, and they got sick of it altogether before long. A big party of them tried the other day to cut off four companies of the Royal Irish Regiment advancing to relieve a French force hard pressed on our left. The Germans lined up along the road just like the police at home trying to turn back a procession that wasn't approved of. The Royal Irish boys didn't take the least heed until they were right up at the Germans, and then they gave them it blazing hot with the bayonet. The Germans' pluck lasts until we are fifty yards from them, and then they are off. It would do you good to see our little chaps chasing great big fellows shouting and laughing. You wouldn't think it was war."

A British Guardsman related how his regiment received German cavalry: "Suddenly the cavalry remounted their horses, and came crashing down on our chaps. 'Now, Guards!' was all the officer in command said, but his men knew what he meant, and they braced themselves for the tussle. They lined up in the good old British square that has proved a terror to European armies before, and the front ranks waited with the bayonet, while the men inside

kept blazing away at the advancing horsemen. They came closer and closer, and the earth seemed to shake and quiver beneath their rush. ‘Steady!’ was all the commander of the — Guards said, and he said it in a dull way, as though he were giving a nice piece of advice to some noisy youngsters who had been making a row. The men answered not a word, but they set their teeth. Then the crash came. Steel met steel, and sparks shot out as sword crossed bayonet. The game of the Germans was to ride down our ranks, but they didn’t know that that trick won’t work with British troops, and the Guardsmen kept their ground, in spite of the weight of men and horses. The Germans came to a dead stop, and just then they got a volley from the centre of the square. They broke and scattered, and then they got another volley. The order was given to the Guards, and they dashed after them towards the point where our other men were expected.”

On another occasion the Brigade of Guards, who were doing a slow retreat for rest, and who were being followed by a brigade of Germans, over double their strength, suddenly stopped, and hiding in a wood waited for the Germans. In a pitched battle, with fixed bayonets, they wiped the whole crowd out —over 4,000 of them. General French had this recorded, and it was read out to all the troops on special parade.

Rifleman Cummings, of the King's Royal Rifles, wrote to his mother: "I shall never forget the first day under fire. It commenced on our left, and in a short time, in spite of heroic efforts, we watched it silence a battery of our guns. The ear-splitting crash of eight shells bursting along our line at once was terrible. However, we held on all day and part of the night. We knew it was part of the scheme, our retiring, and, although hundreds must have been suffering agonies with their feet, the boys always managed a song and a cheer. One night we reached a town and had just settled down in our billets saying to ourselves, 'Now for a well-earned rest,' when we were suddenly ordered to fall in. Our officer told us the Germans had captured a bridge about a mile from the town, and the General had sent word it had to be taken at all costs. It was a dark road and we were all in single file. There was a continued stream of wounded coming up from the bridge. After one or two charges the bridge was taken at the point of the bayonet."

Private Fairweather, of the Black Watch, gives this account of an engagement on the Aisne: "The Guards went up first and then the Camerons, both having to retire. Although we had watched the awful slaughter in these regiments, when it was our turn we went off with a cheer across 1,500 yards of open country. The shelling was terrific and the air

was full of the screams of shrapnel. Only a few of us got up to 200 yards of the Germans. Then with a yell we went at them. The air whistled with bullets, and it was then that my shout of '42nd for ever!' finished with a different kind of yell. Crack! I had been presented with a souvenir in my knee. I lay helpless and our fellows retired over me. Shrapnel screamed all round, and melinite shells made the earth shake. I bore a charmed life. A bullet went through the elbow of my jacket, another through my equipment, and a piece of shrapnel found a resting place in a tin of bully beef which was on my back. I was picked up eventually during the night, nearly dead from loss of blood."

There is little of the glory of war for the wounded when they are waiting to be picked up by the stretcher-bearers and wondering whether they will be picked up at all. No wonder that an officer wrote in a letter: "If ever I come back, and anybody at home talks to me about the glory of war, I shall be d——d rude to him."

This is how another Scotch regiment cleared a road for French artillery when German guns were preventing them from passing along it.

The General commanding the British troops demanded for his men the honour of clearing the way. A Scotch regiment was ordered forward. They left the road and advanced in open order across the

marshy ground on the left towards the position where the German guns were firing. The German fire was deadly, but nothing could stop the Scotch men. They made a series of short rushes, making ample use of the ditches, which every hundred yards or so cross the peat bog, to take cover. They were soon within charging distance. The order for fix bayonets was given, and with a ripple the whole line dashed forward. Ditches, barbed wire, and a hail of bullets from quickfirers did not stop them. A rush carried them right up to the German guns, and they bayoneted the gunners at their pieces. A few minutes sufficed to damage the breeches of the guns and so render them useless, and then the regiment fell back, its task accomplished. The brief period this brilliant charge of the Scotch regiment had lasted was sufficient for the French guns to gallop along the road to safety, and they soon came into action.

CHAPTER VII

CAVALRY CHARGES

A NERVOUS young man broke down when trying at a party to recite Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade." The considerate hostess said, "Just give it in your own words, Mr. ——" My words are very inadequate to describe the charge of the 9th Lancers at Toulin. Terrible damage was being done to British infantry and artillery by eleven German guns concealed in a wood. At last the commanding officer of the Lancers said, "We must take those guns," and ordered his men to charge. They rode straight at the guns though "stormed at by shot and shell." "They were like men inspired," declared a spectator, "and it seemed incredible that any one could escape alive." When the brave fellows got near the guns they came across hidden wire entanglements. Horses and men went down in a heap. Nothing, however, could stop them. They got to the guns, cut down the gunners, and put the guns out of action.

The Lancers took the praises that were given to

them very modestly. "We only fooled round and saved some guns," they said.

At St. Quentin the Black Watch and Scots Greys acted in concert. As at the battle of Waterloo, the Highlanders got into the thick of the fight by holding on to the stirrup leathers of the cavalry. The Greys plunged straight into the ranks of the enemy, each horseman accompanied by a comrade on foot, and the Germans, taken completely by surprise, were broken up and repulsed with tremendous losses. "Our men," said a wounded eye-witness of the charges, "came on with a mighty shout, and fell upon the enemy with the utmost violence. The weight of the horses carried them into the close-formed ranks of the Germans, and the gallant Greys and the 'Kilties' gave a fearful account of themselves."

On another occasion the Scots Greys, seeing the wounded cut at by the German officers, went mad, and, even though the retreat had been sounded, a non-commissioned officer leading, they turned on the Potsdam Guards and hewed their way through, their officers following. Having got through, the officers took command again, formed them up, wheeled, and came back the way they went !

Truly the Greys lived up to or died up to their motto "Second to none." They charged no less than five times at the battle of Mons. One of them

thus wrote : " The Germans and our people had been fighting at long range for several hours and we stood looking on, impatient to get at them. Our officers told us not to worry, as our chance would come, and we soon found that they were right. The enemy, greatly outnumbering our chaps, kept creeping up slowly in spite of tremendous losses. One body was endeavouring to work round our flank, and when they came close enough we had our chance. We tore down into them, cutting and thrusting. They did not wait long, we were covered with blood and so were our horses."

Of a combined charge of the Scots Greys and the 12th Lancers, a sergeant of the Berkshire regiment wrote : " It was grand. I could see some of the Germans dropping on their knees and holding up their arms. Then, as soon as our cavalry got through, the Germans picked up their rifles and started firing again. Our men turned about and charged back. It was no use the Germans putting up their hands a second time. Our cavalry cut down every one they came to. I don't think there were ten Germans left out of about 2,000."

The officer commanding the brigade said that it went through the German cavalry as circus horses might go through paper hoops.

Another episode was the capture of fourteen German guns by the 2nd and 5th Dragoons. They

were attacked at dawn in a fog, and it looked bad for them, but they turned it into a victory.

An officer wrote: "There was no stopping them once they got on the move. Many flung away their tunics and fought with their shirt sleeves rolled up above the elbow. One trooper with his shirt in ribbons actually stooped so low from his saddle as to snatch a wounded comrade from instant death at the hands of a powerful German. Then, having swung the man right round to the near side, he made him hang on to his stirrup leather while he lunged his sword clean through the German's neck."

Well might Sir John French write in an official despatch, "Our cavalry do what they like with the enemy."

I was at Pekin at the end of the Boxer trouble in China, and was standing one day near a German officer when a regiment of Indian cavalry marched past. The German officer made many disparaging remarks about them. The following is a description of the first charge in this war of our Indian cavalry, and the Germans must have learned from it that Indian soldiers are as little contemptible as is the rest of French's army :

"The charge took place one day when the enemy had been pressing us hard all along the line. We had been at it hammer and tongs for three weeks, and were feeling the strain. Towards nightfall the

enemy kept pressing closer and closer, and it looked as though their deadweight alone was going to force us back. Their plan seemed to be to break our line at a point where they guessed our men to be most exhausted. Just when they were half way towards our trenches, the Indians, who had arrived the day before and were anxious to get into it, were brought up. At the word of command they swept forward, only making a slight detour to get out of the line of our fire, and then they swept into the Germans from the left like a whirlwind. The enemy were completely taken aback. The Turcos they knew, but these men, with their flashing eyes, dark skins, and white, gleaming teeth, not to mention their terribly keen-edged lances, they could not understand. The Indians didn't give them much time to arrive at an understanding. With a shrill yell they rode right through the German infantry, thrusting right and left with their terrible lances, and bringing a man down every time. The Germans broke and ran for their lives, pursued by the Lancers for about a mile. When the Indians came back from their charge they were cheered wildly all along our line, but they didn't think much of what they had done."

CHAPTER VIII

GRIT AND GUNS

IN no way has British grit shown itself more in this war than in the capture of German guns and in the defence of our own.

At Neri three artillermen of the now famous L Battery R.H.A., inspired by their heroic commanding officer, continued to serve the only gun not silenced. The three heroes have been given the Victoria Cross.

Driver Grimes, of the Royal Field Artillery, gave the following account of what happened : " We were about two miles away when we got word to come to the relief of 'L' battery. When we arrived on the scene a terrible sight met our eyes. The battery had been blown to smithereens. Guns were smashed or overturned ; some were untouched, but useless, because there was nobody to work them. Officers and men lay dead and wounded on every side. All the officers were killed, and one poor young fellow lay crushed beneath an overturned gun. Haystacks were blazing round about ; the place was

dense with smoke from shell fire. The Germans took them by surprise, and opened on them at no more than 600 yards' range. It was wonderful that anybody could have lived through such a hell—it was nothing else. But there were the sergeant-major and a couple of drivers working away like madmen at one of the guns, coats off, shirts torn open, and bleeding from minor wounds. They never looked round, but kept potting away for all they were worth. We were only in time. For almost immediately we came on the scene they fired their last remaining charge. The Germans cleared off as soon as we got agoing, and we never heard them that day again. I was one of those who assisted the three men back to the ambulance. 'Have you got a glass of water?' one of them asked. 'We got it pretty hot in there just now,' he added. 'You don't need to tell us that,' we replied, looking round at the great holes which the German shells had torn up in the ground on every side."

Captain Bradbury, R.H.A., had served a gun himself, and knocked out one German gun. He had one leg shot away ; but fired off a round or two, until the other leg was taken off. A doctor came to help him, and all he asked from him was morphia so that the men might not hear him screaming.

In a charge at Toulin, Captain Grenfell, of the 9th Lancers, was hit in both legs, and had two fingers

shot off at the same time. Almost as he received these wounds a couple of guns posted near were deprived of their servers, all of whom save one man were struck by bursting shrapnel. The horses for the guns had been placed under cover. "We'll get the guns back," cried Captain Grenfell, and at the head of a number of his men, and in spite of his wounds, he did manage to harness the guns up and get them away. He was then taken to hospital.

The final scene at a British battery during the retirement after the battle of Mons is thus described by Gunner B. Wiseman, of the Royal Field Artillery : "Our battery had fired their last round. The Germans were only three hundred yards away. The order was given, 'Retire. Every man for himself.' It was a splendid but awful sight to see horses, men, and guns racing for life, with shells bursting among them. The Germans rushed up, and I lay helpless. A German pointed his rifle at me to surrender. I refused, and was just on the point of being put out when a German officer saved me. He said, 'Englishman, brave fool.' He then dressed my wound, and gave me brandy and wine, and left me."

About fifty men of the Royal Berkshire Regiment were trying to save some guns at Soissons, and this is what happened in the words of a sergeant in a letter to his wife : " We had an order to abandon the guns, but our young officer said, ' No, boys, we will

never let a German take a British gun.' Our chaps let up a cheer, and kept up a rapid fire. The guns had fired all their ammunition, but we kept on. Then the Staffords came up and reinforced us on our left flank. We then saw the gun teams coming up to fetch the guns."

The following is a letter of a major in the Royal Field Artillery, to his wife : " At last we came to the edge of the wood, and in front of us, about 200 yards away, was a little cup-shaped copse, and the enemy's trenches with machine-guns a little farther on. I felt sure this wood was full of Germans, as I had seen them go on earlier. I started to gallop for it, and the others followed. Suddenly about fifty Germans bolted out firing at us. I loosed off my revolver as fast as I could and —— loosed off his rifle from the saddle. They must have thought we were a regiment of cavalry, for except a few they suddenly yelled and bolted. I stopped and dismounted my lot to fire at them to make sure they didn't change their minds. I held the horses, as I couldn't shoot them like that myself. I then suddenly saw there were more in the copse—so I mounted the party and galloped at it, yelling, with my revolver held out. As I came to it I saw it was full of Germans, so I yelled 'Hands up!' and pointed the revolver at them. They all chucked down their rifles and put their hands up. Three officers and over forty men

to ten of us with six rifles and a revolver. I herded them away from their rifles and handed them over to the Welsh regiment behind us. I tore on with the trumpeter and the sergeant-major to the machine-guns. At that moment the enemy's shrapnel, the German infantry who'd got away, and our own howitzers, thinking we were hostile cavalry, opened fire on us. We couldn't move the beastly things, and it was too hot altogether, so we galloped back to the cup wood and they hailed shrapnel on us there. I waited for a lull, and mounted all my lot behind the bushes and made them sprint as I gave the word to gallop for cover to the woods where the Welsh company was. There I got —, who understands them, and an infantryman who volunteered to help, and — and ran up to the maxims, and took out the breech mechanism of both and one of the belts and carried away one whole maxim. We couldn't manage the other. The Welsh asked what cavalry we were. I told them we were the staff of the — battery and they cheered us, but said we were mad. We got back very slowly on account of the gun and the men wild with excitement, and we have got the one gun complete and the mechanism and belt of the other. The funniest thing was the little trumpeter, who swept a German's helmet off his head and waved it in the air shouting, 'I've got it,' wild with excitement. He is an extraordinarily brave boy."

Lance-Corporal Bignell, Royal Berks, tells how he saw two R.F.A. drivers bring a gun out of action at Mons. Shells had been flying round the position, and the gunners had been killed, whereupon the two drivers went to rescue the gun. "It was a good quarter of a mile away, yet they led their horses calmly through a hail of shell to where the gun stood. Then one man held the horses while the other limbered up."

A Highlander, called Wilson, single-handed captured a German gun. Six Germans were in charge of the gun. Wilson picked off five with his rifle, bayoneted the sixth, and then tried to turn the gun on the enemy. Unfortunately it jammed, and an officer coming up helped him to destroy it. Wilson has been given the Victoria Cross.

Another Highlander had more of guns than he bargained for. In a night fight he lost his regiment, and was picked up by a battery of the Royal Field Artillery, who gave him a lift. But he did not rest long, for the kind gunners went into action ten minutes afterwards with their visitor sitting on one of their guns.

A private in the 1st Lincolns, who has returned home wounded, described how two companies of his regiment captured a battery of six German guns, one of which is now in London :

" During the German retreat the British were held

up on a ridge by a battery. Two companies of us made a detour on the right, marched down a valley out of sight of the German gunners, and entered a wood on the enemy's left. The German battery, about 200 yards away, were busy with their work in front, not dreaming that we were on their flank. In extended order we took steady aim, and at the first round every man of the German battery fell. That was all we fired. Our artillery continued firing on the guns and smashed four. The other two were taken. We were afterwards commended."

In *The Times* appeared the following account, gathered from letters received from brother officers at the front, of the charge in which Lieutenant Sir Archibald Gibson Craig gave his life :

" He was shot while leading his men to the attack of a German machine gun which was hidden in a wood. He located the gun and asked our second in command whether he might take his platoon (about twenty men) and try to capture the gun, which was doing a lot of damage to our troops at the time. The major gave his consent, and Gibson Craig went off to get the gun. . . . They crawled to the top of the hill and found themselves unexpectedly face to face with a large body of Germans. Our men fired a volley, and then the lieutenant drew his sword and rushed forward, ahead of his men, calling to them ' Charge, men ! At them ! ' He got

to within ten yards of them and then fell. By his gallant action he did a great deal to assist the general advance of the regiment, and, in fact, of the whole of the troops engaged. The remaining men silenced the gun, and brought their comrades—two killed and three wounded—back to the lines, two miles, under shell fire all the way, and not one was touched.

A brilliant little exploit was performed by one of our cavalry patrols. Coming suddenly upon a German machine-gun detachment, the subaltern in command at once gave the order to charge, with a result that some of the Germans were killed, the rest scattered, and the gun was captured and carried off.

One who was present described this "double event":

"The sky turned pure black, and I knew we were going to have a heavy shower. But we had a 'double event'—a shower of bullets also. I could see we were attacked in the rear, and all was confusion for a few minutes, but our men soon woke up, and we got the order to fix bayonets. Down came the rain, and lightning and thunder. I stood for a moment to survey the scene. It was like something you would read about. We got the order to charge the guns, and you should have seen the Irish Guards, 3rd Coldstreams and 2nd Grenadiers rush on them like an avalanche. It was all over in ten minutes. The Germans stood dumbfounded. I shouldn't like

to stand in front of that charge myself. Our men were drenched to the skin, but we didn't care, it only made us twice as wild. Such dare-devil pluck I was glad to see."

On one occasion, when the Connaught Rangers were charging with their bayonets to save guns of the Royal Field Artillery, the Germans put up a white flag and afterwards fired on the Irishmen. This got up the Connaught blood, and as one of the Rangers said, that "is nasty to be up agin." The Rangers left their mark on the treacherous foe and saved the guns.

At Charleroi another Irish regiment showed their grit in helping our cavalry to save guns. The horses were shot from under our men, and the Uhlans tried to capture our battery. Then the Munsters stuck to the guns. They dashed forward with fixed bayonets, put the Germans to flight, captured some of their horses, and all their guns.

"There's been a civil av a lot av talk about Irish disunion," says Mr. Dooley, "but if there's foightin' to be done it's the bhoys that'll let nobody else thread on the Union Jack."

A corporal of the Northamptonshire Regiment wrote: "The Germans, who seemed to have the position to a hair's breadth, sent shells shrieking and hissing around a battery of R.F.A. The horses got frantic and began prancing, kicking, and calling

out in terror. The drivers, some of whom had dismounted in readiness for unlimbering, held on like grim death, but the animals were in such a state of terror that they could not be restrained, and at last they dashed off with the guns in the direction of the German lines. The drivers on the ground were knocked down, and one was run over by a carriage, but those who were mounted stuck to their posts and did all they could to restrain the mad horses. A party of new men with horses were brought out and dashed off in pursuit of the terrified animals. They caught them up soon and rode alongside to get hold of the runaways. It was no use, however, and now they came within range of more German guns, and the shells were bursting overhead, making the horses madder than ever. There was nothing for it but to shoot them, and this was done after some difficulty. Then it was necessary to take out the dead team and put the new one in, while German shells were dropping round. Half of the men were hit, but they meant to stick to their posts, and not all the Germans in the field could have driven them away. Just as they were getting the guns away a party of German infantry came on the scene, but by that time our battery had moved out to cover the withdrawal of the guns, and we gave the Germans as much as they could stand."

Simple heroism simply told is the keynote of a

letter which Gunner Batey, of the R.G.A., has written to the parents of Gunner F. S. Mann. He says: "God bless your son. If it had not been for him I should not be alive to tell the tale. We had been fighting for three days across the Meuse, and I was severely wounded by shrapnel, and fell. We had to retreat, but we were determined to save the guns. I fell again, and our men drove off. Your son and I had fought side by side, and he missed me. The noble lad came back through fires of hell, and carried me to safety. He was wounded, but not dangerously. We are all proud of that boy; he is always in the thick of it. All over the line you could hear him shout, 'Lads, lads; the sooner we get through, the sooner we'll get home.' "

CHAPTER IX

GALLANTRY OF INDIVIDUALS

AN Irish Fusilier regiment was in a dangerous position and a messenger was wanted to bring to the men an order to retire. Who would go? Every man offered himself, though they knew that they would have to cross an open country raked with rifle fire. They tossed for the honour, and the first man who started with the message had not gone more than 200 yards when he was wounded, but he rushed on till a second bullet brought him down. Another man took on the message and got only a little way when he was hit. A third messenger almost reached the endangered regiment when he was shot. Half-a-dozen men ran out to bring him in. They all were hit; but the wounded messenger making a supreme effort, crawled to the regiment and delivered the message.

Similar gallantry was shown when the Munster Fusiliers were surrounded and a driver of the R.F.A. named Pledge, who was shut up with them,

was asked to "cut through" and get the assistance of the artillery. Pledge mounted a horse and dashed through the German lines. His horse fell and Pledge's legs were injured. Nothing daunted, he got his horse on its feet, and again set off at a great pace. To get to the artillery he had to pass down a narrow road, which was lined with German riflemen. He did not stop, however, but rode through without being hit by a single bullet. He conveyed the message to the artillery, which tore off to the assistance of the Munsters, and saved the situation.

In view of the death of Prince Maurice of Battenberg, the story told by Corporal J. Jolley, King's Royal Rifles, has special interest. After the retreat from Mons the Germans were severely punished. On reaching a height overlooking Chorley-sur-Marne, the King's Royal Rifles were the advance guard. They noticed the Germans preparing to blow up a bridge, but they got away on seeing the British. The latter were ordered to take the bridge. Prince Maurice was the first man over, and searched a house all by himself—a brave act for an officer alone. The British got across the bridge.

A short time before he was shot the cap of the Prince was struck by a bullet. The Prince made a joke of the occurrence and laughed.

Among those who fell at Cambrai was Captain

Clutterbuck, of the King's Own (Lancaster) Regiment. He was killed while leading a bayonet charge. "Just like Clutterbuck," wrote a wounded sergeant, describing the officer's valour, and adding, "Lieutenant Steele-Perkins also died one of the grandest deaths a British officer could wish for. He was lifted out of the trenches wounded four times, but protested and crawled back again till he was mortally wounded."

A British officer was in one of the Antwerp forts when it was being pounded by great shells. When its doom was sealed the officer ordered the mixed garrison to save themselves. They succeeded in doing so, but the officer, who stuck to the fort as a captain to his sinking ship, was made a prisoner.

A German prisoner told about a Lancashire Fusilier who had been cut off and refused to surrender to two hundred Germans. He lay on the ground and kept firing away until he hadn't a cartridge left, and as his bayonet was gone he stood up with folded arms while they shot him down.

A corporal of the Fusilier Brigade held a company of Germans at bay for two hours by firing at them from different points, and so making them think they had a crowd to face. He was getting on very well until a party of cavalry outflanked him, and as they were right on top of him there was no

deceiving as to his "strength," so he bolted, and the Germans took the position he had held so long.

Rev. Percy Wyndham Guinness, Chaplain to the Forces, 3rd Cavalry Brigade, was awarded a D.S.O., because on November 5th he brought Major Dixon, 16th Lancers, when mortally wounded to an ambulance under heavy fire, and on the afternoon of the same day, being the only individual with a horse in the shelled area, took a message under heavy fire from 4th Hussars to headquarters of 3rd Cavalry Brigade.

An Englishman, who had just returned from making his way by the banks of the Aisne in an attempt to take cigarettes to the troops, came across a solitary grave. Twice he passed it, and his attention was arrested by the fact that kindly hands each day strewed fresh flowers over it. On the pontoon bridge near by a French detachment was keeping guard, and the soldiers explained that the grave was that of an English soldier who, quite alone, had there fought till overwhelmed by numbers. During the great retreat he had strayed from his comrades and fallen exhausted from fatigue. Unable to find them he took up his quarters in an abandoned carriage, but thirty-six hours later the Germans appeared on the other side of the Aisne and fired at him. Undeterred by the fact that he was utterly alone he replied, and such was his determination and accuracy of aim that the villagers declared

he accounted for six German officers, one of them a general, before he fell under a volley. The French buried him where he had fought, and erected a cross in honour of his gallantry.

The 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers were defending a bridge and the Germans were firing into them. An officer called Stephens was severely wounded, and would have fallen into the hands of the enemy if he had not been rescued by one of the sergeants. Cropp (that was the sergeant's name) went on the bridge, seized the wounded officer, and placed him on his back. Instead of risking a journey across the shot-swept bridge, he decided, encumbered as he was, to swim the canal, which he did. He swam with the wounded officer out of the line of fire to a place of safety.

A private in the East Yorkshire Regiment tells the following story—"One of the hardest night attacks we had to face was made possible by the momentary carelessness of a lad of the Loyal North Lancashires who was on guard and somehow allowed his thoughts to stray in other directions so that he didn't notice the Germans until they were on top of him. He was disarmed, and became terribly distressed over the prospect of what his carelessness had brought on the Army. He had one chance of redeeming his fault, and he took it. Just when the Germans were half-way towards the sleeping camp

he made a run for it. He didn't go far, but the shots fired by the Germans warned the camp of what was coming, and the advanced guard held them in check until the main body got under arms. When we found that lad he was just able to explain what had happened, but he was quite happy when I told him there wasn't a soldier who wouldn't think that his heroism had atoned for the original fault. At that he smiled and passed away."

Another private wrote: "One poor fellow here deserves the V.C. He saved two officers under heavy firing ; then after that a shell came and blew a horse right in two. One part of the horse fell across the legs of another wounded man. This fellow, named Morris, of the R.E., rushed out and tried to pull the horse off him. He just managed to do so, and the chap could get up, when another shell came and blew the wounded chap's head and shoulders off, at the same time blowing half of Morris's right leg off. The brave fellow has a wife and three children and is only twenty-five years old. I am glad to say he is getting better, although the whole of his leg has been taken off."

This story was told by a sergeant of the Northumberland Fusiliers. "There was a man of the Manchester Regiment who was lying close to the German lines terribly wounded. He happened to overhear some conversation between German soldiers, and

being familiar with the language, he gathered that they intended to attack the position we held that night. In spite of his wounds he decided to warn us of the danger, and he set out on the weary tramp of over five miles. He was under fire from the moment he got to his feet, but he stumbled along in spite of that, and soon got out of range. Later he ran into a patrol of Uhlans, but before they saw him he dropped to earth and shammed being dead. They passed by without a sign, and then he resumed his weary journey. But this time the strain had told on him, and his wound began to bleed, marking his path towards our lines with thin red streaks. In the early morning, just half an hour before the time fixed for the German attack, he staggered into one of our advanced posts, and managed to tell his story to the officer in charge before collapsing in a heap. Thanks to the information he gave, we were ready for the Germans when they came, and beat them off ; but his anxiety to warn us had cost him his life."

There was a time during the battle of Ypres when our line, so thin in comparison with that of the Germans, was in great danger of being broken, but the courage of individuals of all ranks saved the situation. The General commanding the division spent one day with his staff in the trenches encouraging the men. Brigadier-General H. E. Watts rushed

into the firing line on one occasion to rally the infantry. A spy, a German in a British uniform, had brought an order to retire at a moment when retirement would have meant annihilation. From his post in a château the Brigadier saw the movement. He acted at once. He ran through a storm of shrapnel, placed himself at the head of the battalions, formed them up under cover of a road, and then headed them at the charge back to the trench they had vacated.

Private Jones and Private Vennicombe, 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, decided that they would rescue Colonel Ponsonby, their colonel, who had fallen. Although German bullets were falling fast, the two men made a dash towards their colonel's body. They found that he had been shot in the leg, and was unable to walk. Between them they managed to get back safely into the cover of their companions, carrying their colonel.

So great was the gallantry of Private Goggins, of the Leinster Regiment, that in a night he brought in under fire no less than sixty wounded men.

Sergeant-major White, of the Army Service Corps, was awarded the Victoria Cross for a deed which he thus described to an interviewer. "We got orders at night to move a convoy. We ran into an ambush of Uhlans and they gave it to us hot. I accounted for four of them with my sword, but we had to retire.

When we reached a place where we could pull ourselves together the officer asked if anyone had seen Captain Grey, who was in charge. It was stated he had been shot down, and I said I would go back for him. I went and found him, and placing him across my horse, galloped back to safety with bullets whistling round. I was hit in both legs."

Lance-corporal F. W. Holmes, of the 2nd Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, after carrying a wounded man out of the trenches under heavy fire assisted to drive a gun out of action by taking the place of the driver, who had been wounded. His letters to his wife contained no mention of his deeds, but after he was invalidated home with a bullet wound in the leg, he informed her that he had received the French Medaille Militaire and had been recommended for the Victoria Cross.

An officer of the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers, writing to the parents of Private Tom Barry, said : " All letters written by men have to be read and signed by an officer. Your son is under me (on the maxim gun), and I read his letters. I see he is too modest to tell you that he has been mentioned for conspicuous conduct. During an advance the man carrying one of the maxims was wounded and lying in the open. Your son ran out from under cover, brought the gun up to the firing

line, and then went back for the ammunition he had previously been carrying. He is a good soldier, and I am proud to have him in my section. If you have any more like Tom, send them out here."

War in the air has given to many individuals an opportunity of showing gallantry. An officer thus described a duel between a German and a British airman. "The German manœuvred for position and prepared to attack, but our fellow was too quick for him, and darted into a higher plane. The German tried to circle round and follow, and so in short spurts they fought for mastery, firing at each other all the time, the machines swaying and oscillating violently. The British airman, however, well maintained his ascendancy. Then suddenly there was a pause, the German machine began to reel, the wounded pilot had lost control, and with a dive the aeroplane came to earth half a mile away. Our man hovered about for a time, and then calmly glided away over the German lines to reconnoitre."

CHAPTER X

SELF PUT ASIDE

THE following are abbreviated narratives from letters printed in several papers:

Five wounded British soldiers who had lost their regiment managed to limp in the wake of the army until they found an officer lying wounded in a trench. They were all too weak to carry him, but they told him that they could not leave him there to the tender mercies of the butchers. "Push on, my lads," he replied. "England wants every man who can possibly save himself. Better for one life to be lost than six." But they did not leave him, and soon almost jumped for joy to see a motor-car flying the British flag. They were taken in the car to a French hospital.

We are so accustomed, however, to read of officers saying, when mortally wounded, to their men, "Do your duty, my lads, and never mind me," that their self-forgetfulness almost ceases to surprise.

One officer was hit, and his men were for putting

on his first field dressing. "No," said he, "I am past that, but for God's sake don't let the Germans break the line."

There was a British gunner whose wonderful marksmanship was the talk of his battery. One shell blew up a railway station, the second fell plump into a German victualling train, and the third lopped off the team of an advancing battery. Finally the German gunners hit him in the legs. Even then he would not leave the field. "Carry me to the gun and let me have one more shot," he implored. His comrades did so, and without a groan he took his last aim.

A similar instance of self-sacrifice for the sake of duty was related in *The Evening News* by Private R. G. Tipper, of the 3rd Battalion Grenadier Guards. "There was a man in the trenches who had not got a clean sheet; he was always getting into trouble for one thing or another. He got hit in the left arm. He crawled back to the nearest field ambulance, and had his wound dressed. We advised him to go to the rear, but he refused, and with difficulty made his way back to the firing line. There, despite his wounded arm, he steadily went on firing at the enemy. Some time passed, and he was shot in the right arm. Again he made the difficult and painful journey to the field hospital, and again, with both his arms injured, he stubbornly insisted

on crawling back to the trench. By-and-by he collapsed, shot clean through the body. Several comrades ran to him and raised him. ‘You must get back now,’ they told him. ‘No,’ he said with a white face, ‘let me be. The blighters have done me this time.’ His rifle still rested where he had been firing, supported in its loophole. ‘Hoist me up before you go,’ he muttered, ‘I’ll give them another round, so help me! Prop me up, quick.’ They knew they could do nothing. They propped him up beside his rifle and went to the other wounded men. With fumbling hands the dying man pointed his rifle, and let drive two more rounds at the enemy. Then he slipped down dead.”

The fighting around Ypres involved a great amount of very risky observation work. In many instances artillery subalterns took up dangerous positions well in advance of the front line of infantry, and, telephone in hand, gave the range to the gunners with perfect calmness. A young lieutenant posted himself in a tower a few hundred yards from the German trenches. He telephoned his orders regularly for half an hour. Then he said, without any trace of excitement, to the operator on the other side, “I hear the Germans coming up the stairs. I have my revolver. Don’t believe anything more you hear.” With these words he dropped the receiver; and he has not been heard of since.

When there is the excitement and stimulus of a "gallery" it is comparatively easy to be brave; but think of the heroism of such lonely work as that which was done by Lieutenant F. H. N. Davidson, R.F.A. Early in the day our gunners had found it impossible to locate certain German guns which were fast rendering our trenches untenable. The country was so flat that there was no possible point of vantage from which the gunners could observe except the steeple of the church in Lourges. But the Germans knew that as well as we did, so the church was being vigorously shelled, and already no less than twelve lyddite shells had been pitched into it. It was the duty of Lieutenant Davidson to "observe," so he calmly went to the church, climbed the already tottering tower, and, seated on the top, proceeded to telephone his information to the battery. In consequence German battery after battery was silenced, the infantry, which at one time was in danger of extermination, was saved, and the position, in spite of an attack in overwhelming force by the enemy, was successfully held. The church was rendered a scrap heap, but still Davidson sat on the remnants of his tower. For seven solid hours expecting death every moment, he calmly scanned the country, and telephoned his reports. At dark his task was done, and he came down to rejoin the battery. As he left the ruins a fall of timber in one

of the burning houses lit up everything with a sudden glare, there was the crack of a rifle—the German trenches were only a few hundred yards away—and a bullet passed through the back of his neck and out through his mouth. But, without hurrying his pace, he walked to his battery, gave them his final information, and then said, “I think I’d better go and find the field ambulance, for the beggars have drilled a hole in me that needs plugging.” And he walked half a mile to the nearest “collecting point.”

A man who was struck with four bullets in his thighs remarked, “What luck to have got all four ; that means three comrades more to fight the Germans.”

A private of the 1st Warwicks was hit with a shrapnel bullet at the battle of Mons. He said, “Good luck to the old regiment,” and rolled over on his back dead. What *esprit de corps* ! What forgetfulness of self !

The gunner who wrote the following had the freedom from self which enables us to sympathise : “I had comparatively little pain, though it seemed that my arm had been blown away. I could not verify this, because I was so numb it was impossible to move. What did hurt was the sight of pal after pal around me either killed outright at one go, or ‘snuffing it’ in agony quite near.”

Another soldier, though mortally wounded himself, felt so much for a wounded pal that he said to the doctor, " See to that poor bloke first. He is going home ; he will be home before me."

Some of the Irish Dragoons went to the assistance of a man of the Irish Rifles who, wounded himself, was yet kneeling beside a fallen comrade of the Gloucester Regiment, and gamely firing to keep the enemy off. The Dragoons found both men thoroughly worn out, but urgency required the regiment to take up another position, and the wounded men had to be left. " They knew that," said the trooper who related the incident, " and weren't the men to expect the general safety to be risked for them. ' Never mind,' said the young Irishman, ' shure the Red Cross chaps 'll pick us up all right, an' if they don't—well, we've only once to die, an' it's the grand fight we've had, annyhow.' "

Private F. Bruce, of the Suffolk Regiment, acted in this self-forgetting way when wounded. After much hesitation he told the story to a newspaper interviewer : " The bullet that hit me prevented me from shooting. I said to a mate, ' I'm no good, so I'll make room for a better man.' He said, ' Don't go in this lot, you'll get riddled with bullets.' I said, ' Neck or nothing, mate ; I'm keeping out somebody who could do more good than me.' I got

up and ran about twenty yards, and a lyddite-shell burst about five or six yards in front of me, nearly bringing me down with the suffocating fumes. I regained my footing, and ran further, until I came to two artillery men. One was wounded in five places, and the other was all right. After giving the wounded man water, I tried to get to another fellow. Every time I made a start the Germans began firing at me, as they were closing round my company. But I was determined to go, and I made a dash for it. I ran about twenty yards, and dived into some standing corn. I got to the poor fellow. A live shell had burst and hit him in the lower part of the body. I asked him if I could do anything for him, and he said, 'Yes; have you got a rifle?' 'Yes,' I said. 'Well,' he said, 'for God's sake shoot me out of my misery.' I told him I could not do that, so I gave him water. A Highlander came up with a wound straight through the elbow. I bandaged him up. At that time the Germans were only about 60 yards away. We had to make a dash for our lives. I saw my company captured just at our rear, but we managed to get to safety."

Even for one of the enemy self was bravely put aside. Seeing a wounded German lying between the German and British trenches, a British officer ordered the "Cease Fire," and himself went out to pick up the man. He was struck by several bullets

before the Germans saw what he was doing and ceased firing. Thereupon the British officer staggered to the fallen man and carried him to the German lines. A German officer received him with a salute, and, calling for cheers, pinned upon the breast of the British hero an Iron Cross. Then the Britisher returned to his own trenches. He was recommended for the Victoria Cross, but succumbed to his wounds.

A soldier wrote : " I saw a handful of Irishmen throw themselves in front of a regiment of cavalry, who were trying to cut off a battery of horse artillery. It was one of the finest deeds I ever saw. Not one of the poor lads got away alive, but they made the German devils pay in kind, and, anyhow, the artillery got away to account for many more Germans."

A private told the following to a newspaper correspondent : " A picket of our regiment posted on a hill overlooking our left was surprised in the early morning by a party of German infantry who had crept up under cover of a mist. Our men refused to surrender, and all were shot down but one, who was overpowered by the Germans. They wanted to get information about our strength from him, and thought they had only to offer him his life in return. He refused to tell anything, and then they were going to shoot him, when he made a dash

for it. At that moment a party of our men, alarmed by the firing, came up, and the Germans were cut off."

A sergeant wrote: "There was a man of the Buffs who carried a wounded chum for over a mile under German fire, but if you suggested a Victoria Cross for that man he would punch your head, and as he's a regular devil when roused the men say as little as they can about it. He thinks he didn't do anything out of the common, and doesn't see why his name should be dragged into the papers."

So, too, an English colonel who had saved the life of a French private kept the deed a secret for fear of "a beastly fuss" being made about it.

Similar modesty was shown by a Highlander who helped a wounded comrade for four days through a country full of Germans. "When I found them," wrote a lance-corporal, "they had only a few biscuits between them. I pressed the unwounded man to tell me how they managed to get through the four days on six biscuits, but he always got angry and told me to shut up. He had gone without anything; and had given the biscuits to the wounded man."

Near Cambrai one dark night the British took the offensive against the Germans, who were holding a bridge spanning the canal. When our men reached an embankment running sharply down to the river

several failed to secure a foothold, and fell into the water. Four of the men who were unable to swim, were in imminent danger of drowning, when Corporal Brindall, an excellent swimmer, plunged into the river and rescued all four in turn. He was clambering up the embankment himself, when a German shell exploded near him, killing him instantly.

A man of the West Yorkshire Regiment took off his coat and equipment, and walked over to the German trenches under a perfect hail of bullets and brought back the adjutant, then made ten more journeys, bringing in the colonel and nine men. He has been recommended for the V.C.

A soldier wrote in this way of an engagement : " We got the order to retire none too soon, for we had just left the trenches when the Germans swept across the plain where we had been entrenched. Our officer in command was wounded at 3.30 a.m., but notwithstanding his wound he stuck to his post, and it was not until 1 p.m. that we discovered he was wounded and unable to walk. As we marched past him it cheered us greatly to hear him say, ' Good boys, you've had a very successful day.' "

In one of the first battles of the war a British soldier rode on a bicycle through the bullets of German sharp-shooters to warn French soldiers that

they were going into an ambush. After the daring deed the French commander dismounted from his horse, took from his own tunic a medal he himself had won for bravery, and pinned it on the British cyclist's breast. "It was given to me, *mon camarade*," he said, "for saving one life. I have the honour to present it to you for saving the lives of hundreds."

Private J. Warwick, of the 2nd Durham Light Infantry, did not wish to speak of the deeds for which he was recommended for the V.C. After some persuasion, however, he told the story. "The Germans were entrenched not 80 yards away on the other side of a hill, their trenches being far more formidable than ours. We had not very long to wait before shells and bullets began to fly about us in all directions. Our men tried to rush up the hill, but first one and then the other fell under the hail of fire. The Germans were at least twelve to one, but our men held their own, fighting as I have never seen men fight before. We had a great leader in Major Robb. He led the men splendidly. Lieutenant Twist, one of our number, tried to advance with a company up the hill, but he was quickly shot down. I saw him shot, and although the shrapnel was flying and bullets were coming like rain, I made a dash and brought him back to the trenches. Then I saw Private Howson, a Darlington chap, fall,

and I succeeded in bringing him from the firing line. The poor chap was shot through the neck and the shoulders, though I believe he is still living. I then went back and succeeded in bringing Private Maughan. My last journey was the most difficult of all. I had to travel over the crest of the hill to within 30 yards of the German trenches, and how I escaped being killed I really do not know. I crawled on my stomach and got along as best I could, and I am glad to say that I succeeded in bringing Major Robb back right, as it were, from the very noses of the Germans. It was a hard job to get him, and in my effort I was shot through the back and fell."

A Royal Fusilier wrote : " While we were chatting and smoking, German shrapnel began to burst on the trees above us. . . . I did not think I should see home again, but we were all cool enough. . . . Eight volunteers were wanted to cross the bridge and tell a section in danger of being captured to retire. I made one volunteer, and my chum another. We were walking between some railway trucks when bullets began to whistle through ; one could almost feel the heat of some of them, so close did they pass. We lay down for a minute, and I said, 'We must get there somehow.' Four stayed there and four of us went on. Directly we got up more bullets came over, and one poor fellow got one in

the neck. We left him in the care of the other four and made a run for it. We got there and warned the section. Coming back we had to keep running and lying down alternately, but got back in the end with only one wounded."

CHAPTER XI

BROTHERS-IN-ARMS

WHATEVER Christians who profess more do in reference to brotherly love, British soldiers are real brothers to each other on active service. Each man seems to say, "He that sheds his blood with me, shall be my brother."

The following is from a sergeant's letter in *The Evening News*: "Out there sublime deeds of heroism are being performed every day by common soldiers whom the ordinary 'civvy' would pass by with contempt in times of peace. After Cambrai I was thrown a lot with a wild Glasgow Irishman belonging to the Royal Scots and a wounded man of the Dorsets. We took refuge in a farmhouse, and one day the Irishman had the ill-luck of showing himself to a party of Germans on the prowl. He took it into his head that he hadn't played the game by bringing the Germans down on us, and after reporting their presence he said he was going out just for a bit of a dander. He had not an earthly chance of escaping. Before he left I told

him so, but that didn't weigh with him at all. 'It's like this,' he said, 'you've got a missus and children to look after. So's that chap in the corner. I'm as bad as they make 'em, and nobody will be a thraneen the poorer if I'm shot this very minute. It was my carelessness in going about that gave us away to the Germans. They don't know there's anybody here but me, and if I rush out they'll get me and go off content. He walked coolly out to the front gate, and made a rush into the fields to the left. The Germans saw him and fired. He fell riddled with bullets, and they went after him. They must have thought that he was the only man in the house, for they didn't come back, and we lay there for three days until we managed to get back to our own lines.'

Another man also thought of wife and kids. "In a night fight one of the Gloucesters had his rifle knocked out of his hand, and a big German lunged at him with a bayonet. Quick as lightning one of his mates sprang between him and the German, and received the thrust in his chest. He died within an hour, and when they asked him why he did it, his answer was, 'Oh, God, I couldn't help it. He's got a wife and kids.' "

A corporal of the Bedfordshire Regiment wrote : "Near our trenches there were a lot of wounded, and their cries for water were pitiful. In the trenches

was a quiet chap of the Engineers, who could stand it no longer. He collected all the water bottles he could lay hold of, and said he was going out. The air was thick with shell and rifle fire, and to show yourself at all was to sign your death warrant. That chap knew it as well as we did, but that was not going to stop him. He got to the first man all right and gave him a swig from a bottle. No sooner did he show himself than the Germans opened fire. After attending to the first man he crawled along the ground to others until he was about a quarter of a mile away from us. Then he stood up and zigzagged towards another batch of wounded, but that was the end of him. The German fire got hotter and hotter. He was hit badly, and with just a slight upward fling of his arms he dropped to earth like the hero he was. Later he was picked up with the wounded, but he was as dead as they make them out here. The wounded men for whose sake he had risked and lost his life thought a lot of him, and were greatly cut up at his death. One of them who was hit so hard that he would never see another Sunday said to me as we passed the Engineer chap, who lay with a smile on his white face, and had more bullets in him than would set a battalion of sharpshooters up in business for themselves, 'He was a rare good one, he was. It's something worth living for to have seen a deed like that, and now that I

have seen it, I don't care what becomes of me.' That's what we all felt about it."

One of the King's Royal Rifles told in a letter how a Highlander milked a cow under rifle and shell fire to get something for his wounded mates to drink when the water ran out. Also how a boy of the Connaught Rangers rushed out of the trenches under heavy fire to an orchard near by to get an apple for a wounded comrade who was suffering from thirst and hunger. "He got the apple all right, but he got a German bullet or two in him as well on the way back, and dropped dead within 50 feet of the goal. The wounded chap had his apple brought in after an artillery man had been wounded in getting at it. I hope he valued it, for it was the costliest apple I ever heard tell of bar one, and that was a long time ago."

Sergeant J. Rolfe, 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifles, wrote : "When I got hit, I couldn't say how long I lay there, but a chum of mine, Tommy Quaife, under a perfect hail of bullets and shells, dragged me to safety, and said, 'Cheer up, Smiler, here's a fag. I'm going back for Sandy' (his other chum). He never got there. Poor Tommy got a piece of shell and was buried the same night."

In a lancer charge near Cambrai a man dropped a letter. It had arrived just as the order was given to mount, and he had not had time to read it.

Even in mid-charge a comrade saw it fall out of his tunic and returned it at great risk.

Two Highlanders were carrying a wounded comrade, and he dropped a stick of chocolate, a thing of which only soldiers in the field under trying conditions know the value. He fretted and worried about it, and at last one of his chums volunteered to go back for it to where it had been dropped, not more than two hundred yards away. He never came back. In full view of his companions he was hit by a bullet and fell dead. There was another case where a religious Dublin Fusilier lost his life because he stayed just long enough to cross the hands of a dead comrade, and say a prayer for his departed soul.

One night a man of the West Yorkshire Regiment took off his coat and wrapped it around a wounded chum who had to lie there until the ambulance took him away. All that night he stood in the trenches in his shirt-sleeves, with water up to his waist, and the temperature near to freezing point, quietly returning the German fire. On the afternoon of the following day he had acute pneumonia.

The following was related by a British Hussar. After the charge of the Highlanders on the German heavy guns near Hanbourdin the Hussar was sent with a message to the base. On the way he encountered a Seaforth Highlander going in the same

direction. Something in the man's set face prompted the question : " Are you hurt ? " " Aye, a sma' matter," was the reply. The man's arm was shattered from shoulder to elbow. " Are you going to sick bay?" said the cavalryman. " It's a mile and a half away. Get on my gee." " No, no," said the Scot, " I'll just walk, you'll find many worse hit than me."

Private D. F. Gilmore, of the Seaforth Highlanders, told this in a letter: " It was on the Aisne. We had had a hard day. Our casualties were greater than I care to tell. I was with a fatigue party collecting the wounded and burying the dead. We came on a sergeant of artillery and about twenty wounded men. The sergeant was nearest and I signed to my mates to take him first. He waved us away. ' I can wait. Get the others first. They're much worse.' That was what he said. We persisted. He got angry. ' I'm your superior in rank, and if you disobey I'll report you for insubordination.' That settled it, so we started on the others. We got the last away, and came back for the sergeant. He was stone dead. Unknown to us he had been bleeding to death. He must have known that when he made us attend to the others. Had he been taken at first his life would have been saved."

The night before the beginning of the same battle

of the Aisne, two men of the Middlesex Regiment had a disagreement and came to blows. The conqueror was struck with shrapnel next day, and the man who was beaten endangered his life to save him. When he had nearly dragged him to a place of safety a shell killed both men.

A stretcher party came on seven men wounded. Only six could be taken, and the problem was to select the seventh. One man solved it. "I'm the worst case," he said. "If you take me I'll probably die on the way. These other chaps will all pull through and make good soldiers yet. Leave me. You won't? Well, if you try to take me I'll resist, and that'll be the end of me, so you'd better let me have my way." What could they do but let him have his way? And so he was left. An hour later they came back, and he was dead.

"There were two men of the Camerons who had been chums since their boyhood" (writes Sergeant R. Duffy, Rifle Brigade). "They had 'listed together, and been in I don't know how many scrapes and 'scraps' side by side. In the fighting around Ypres one night one of them got hit in a bayonet fight. The regiment had to return to the trenches, leaving the wounded to take their chance for the time being out in the cold. The wounded man's chum caught sight of him lying in the roadway with the pallor of death in his face, and his

teeth chattering with the terrible cold. ‘ My God, Jock,’ he exclaimed, ‘ is it you that’s lying there ? A canna’ lee ye, so a’ll stay wi’ ye tae the morn.’ The wounded man wouldn’t hear of it, but his chum meant to have his way, and he got it. Next morning we had a look for the two, and we found them side by side—both dead. They had crept together under their greatcoats to keep warm, but death had found them all the same.”

A cavalry sergeant, though he had got three wounds, went to a badly wounded corporal who was shouting to be taken out of the way of the line. The wounded sergeant bound up the other man’s wound, set him on his own horse and sent him back out of the way. Then the sergeant limped along on foot as best he could after his regiment to fight again.

W. Roberts, 1st Life Guards, wrote to a friend how his regiment gave timely and thoughtful assistance : “ We were sent to help the Queen’s Regiment one day. It was just getting dark, and it had been raining for three days without stopping. We were only just in time, and they had given up all hope. The Germans were just about to charge them, but when they saw us they made it ‘ as you were.’ We helped to carry out the wounded. It was awful. They were nearly wiped out ; chaps with arms and faces smashed. It was terrible. The trenches were full of water, and the men were

blue with cold, and as our chaps went to carry out the dead and wounded the Germans fired on them. We made them as comfortable as we could, making them fags and giving them tea, and we took their places in the trenches that night."

How these acts should rebuke us when in time of peace we refuse to do small deeds of kindness !

When allies do not pull well together there is trouble, but happily this is not the case in the present war. There is a fine fraternity between the French and the British soldier. The French calls out, "Bravo, Tommie!" and his British brother replies, "Right, O!" It is not a long conversation and there is no dangerous discussion, but it shows good will.

Once at least French and British soldiers were play-fellows. Seven of our men having lost their regiment joined a French one for the time being. They taught the French how to play football, and often played with them when under fire.

One of the Royal Lancasters said in a letter that the sign manual of friendship between the French and the British soldier is a cross on the throat indicating their wish to the Kaiser. "The French Tommies copy us a lot, and they like, when they have time, to stroll into our lines for a chat or a game. They are fond of the jam served to us and exchange things for it."

On one occasion the appreciation of the French soldiers was even embarrassing. They had seen the Irish Guards put to flight great numbers of the "Kaiser" crush," and when the regiment marched back the French stood up in their trenches and roared applause. The Irish Guards, who only became a regiment after the Boer war, felt shy about this French fuss. They did not like the idea that it was their first time in action, and that their battle honour was brand new.

CHAPTER XII

UNDER FIRE

ASKED what it feels like to be under fire, a soldier replied: "It makes you sweat waiting for the shock of getting hit. It is the suspense that tries. The first few weeks at the war are awful. You awaken in your sleep and think you are being fired at. Not that the German infantry are good marksmen (the artillery are). Why, the other day I noticed a chap who had been aiming in my direction for several minutes, and none of ours had been touched. I stood up and said to a chum: 'Watch that chap. I bet you he won't hit me.' And he didn't, for I heard the bullet whistle by several inches wide."

The feeling of waiting to go under fire is thus described: "We were to hold the trenches at all costs, and things began to take a serious turn. It was then that I and my chum took photographs we had with us from our pockets and looked long into the faces of those we had left at home. Then

we took out our small books and made our wills, and then waited."

A private of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment wrote : " There were many field artillery drivers with spare horses behind a shed, and one was asleep in front of me on a truss of hay. A shell from a ' Black Maria ' came over the corner of the shed and dropped not more than 8 feet from me. It killed the poor driver and blew one horse up and the other horses into a heap. It seemed to me as if I had been suddenly thrown into a white hot furnace, and a big metallic door slammed on me. I was dazed for five minutes and shaky all day, but the feeling soon wore off. It is wonderful how soon you get over these things. These ' Black Maria ' shells make a screaming noise, followed by a terrific explosion, but the effect is purely local, except for splinters flying. Next day we came under rifle fire as well as big gun fire. Then we knew it. It was not a pleasant sight to see men falling around you screaming. I remember saying to a chap alongside of me, " I wouldn't give twopence for my chance."

" It's a curious sort of feeling," another man wrote, " to be under fire. It's—well you feel that war is a really dangerous thing."

Much of course depends upon the soldier's temperament. An officer had the moral courage to

write in a letter, "I have been under fire a few times now, and like it less every time."

An Indian soldier gave the impression of himself and of his fellows : " The shell fire was a bit troublesome at first, because it was far worse than anything we had ever experienced in frontier fighting, and few of us had had any experience of being under fire. We soon got used to it, and it didn't trouble us more than thunder. The rifle fire wasn't so bad, for the Germans aren't very good shots. Still, it was annoying to us to have to lie still under it when we like to be getting to close grips."

An officer described a retreat under fire as follows : " My platoon (fifty men) was some 200 yards behind the firing line to start with. I was soon ordered to bring them up, which was not a too comfortable job, as shells were bursting by now just in front of us. However, I shouted to the men, telling them to go on, and saying that they would be safer further up the hill. Then the battery doing most of the firing on us stopped for a moment to reload and resight, and I got the men on a hundred yards, and then the shells began bursting like hail just where we had come from. Then they kept altering their range from time to time, and you could sometimes hear the shot and shell come down only a few yards off, and of course you could always hear the shell singing through the air, and sometimes felt

the breath of them. Around me the men behaved splendidly. (The whole regiment has been congratulated on its having done well.) We lay there in the potato crop like partridges. I think we were all too petrified to move ; but where we were we lay just below the crest of a ridge waiting to crawl up to see to fire if any German infantry came along. We lay under that shell fire for three hours, and I think that none of us will ever forget the feeling of thinking that the next moment we might be dead—perhaps blown to atoms. I kept wondering what it was going to feel like to be dead, and all sorts of little things that I had done, and places I had been to years ago and had quite forgotten, kept passing through my mind. I have often heard of this happening to a drowning man, but have never experienced it before, and don't want to again ! I think you get so strung up that your nerves get into an abnormal condition. My brain seemed extraordinarily cool and collected, which I was proud of and am still ; but I looked at my hands and saw them moving and twisting in an extraordinary way, as if they didn't belong to me, and when I tried to use my field-glasses to spy at the Germans, it was as much as I could do with the greatest effort to get them up to my eyes, and then I could scarcely see. When the order to retire came our company got it late. I told my platoon—

those who were left—to double back and assemble behind a house in a road behind us. I stopped behind to collect stragglers and to carry a couple of wounded into the house, where the doctor was seeing to them ; and I believe I was the last to leave. By this time the bullets had begun to sing all round us, and the German infantry were getting close, so it was high time to clear out. I and a last party of five climbed up a pear tree and over a garden wall, and so, creeping along with the bullets now flying all round, we got over another wall and so up a path exposed for a short way. We ran along this, and I remember, as an instance of the stupid things one does in moments of excitement, my little hair-brush jumped out suddenly from my haversack, and I ran back five or six yards to pick it up, and risked a life for a hair-brush ! I found subsequently two holes in my haversack where a bullet had passed through, just grazing my clothes, and it may have been then that it went through."

I did not myself know Mr. Geoffrey Pearson, Lord Cowdray's son, but a friend of his told me so much about him that it was with sorrow that I read the dramatic story of his death. He and a sergeant-major were acting as motor-cyclists with the motor transport, and what happened is thus told by the sergeant-major : " We were going along

a straight piece of road, with open country on either side, and were letting our machines out for all they were worth. We were alone. Suddenly, without the least warning, we seemed to ride into a perfect hailstorm of bullets which came over from somewhere on our left. Ahead of us the road ran into a little wood. 'Come on, we'll ride for it,' I said, and we dashed through in safety. Hardly had we entered the wood belt, however, than we rode into a group of German cavalry—about fifty of them—scattered about on either side of the road. They immediately fired at us. We saw the game was up, as there was no getting away from them at all, so we tumbled off our bikes, put up our hands, and surrendered. The Germans treated us shamefully. They gave us nothing to eat, and taunted and jeered at us at every opportunity. That night we spent in the open, lying on the roadside between two men. We had no over-coats, and it was most bitterly cold. I think I have never been so cold in my life as I was that night. The Germans took us on with them on their advance against the French. They made us go into the trenches with them. We were thrust in the line with the rest under a terrific fire from the French guns and infantry. We decided to make a dash for it. The Germans were all very busy with the fight, and we were able to crawl away unperceived

out of the trenches and through the long grass. Moreover, when we were about 200 or 300 yards away the Germans saw us, and a number of them immediately opened fire. Pearson was shot through the head. We were under fire with a vengeance."

Speaking of a particularly fierce fight a Gordon Highlander said that it might have been a sham one the way the Gordons took it. In the thick of it they sang Harry Lauder's latest. Those who could not sing whistled, and those who could not whistle talked about football, and joked with each other.

One of the West Kent Regiment speaking of the German artillery fire said that the din seems to hit you. You feel as if your ears would burst, and the teeth fall out of your head. He thought little, however, of the enemy's infantry. "If we fired as badly as they do we would be put in jail."

A Dublin Fusilier said that while the shells shrieked blue murder over their heads they smoked cigarettes, sang about the girls, and were as cool as Liffy water. "If I should arrive home safe I think I shall get a job as doorkeeper at an oyster shop, as I am having a course of shell dodging."

Corporal F. Leeming, R.F.A., wrote to his wife : "I am all right, but still have to keep ducking every time a ' messenger from the Kaiser ' comes whistling round. It is not exactly like throwing eggs about

when their shells burst. They make a hole in the ground about 20 feet across, and the noise is terrible and nerve-racking. You feel pretty shaky at first."

According to Private Thomas Mulholland, Highland Light Infantry, shells were not as much appreciated at a dance as ladies would have been : " In the trenches last week we held a dance, for want of something better to do. Of course, the only partners were fellow-soldiers ; but still it was a change from the monotony of shell fire. Not that the shells were absent, for just when we had settled down to enjoy the jigging the enemy began to worry us with shrapnel. The shells burst all around, and one burst in the middle of a little group of men giving a Gaelic four-hand reel. Every man was killed. After that we thought it best to stop."

Afternoon tea under fire was like this : " The mugs were passed round with the biscuits and the 'bully' as best they could by the mess orderlies, but it was hard work messing without getting more than we wanted. My next-door neighbour, so to speak, got a shrapnel bullet in his tin, and another two doors off had his biscuit shot out of his hand. Private Plant had a cigarette shot out of his mouth, and a comrade got a bullet into his tin of bully beef. 'It saves the trouble of opening it,' was his remark."

One day a shell smashed a breakfast porridge pot, and another scattered a dinner of stew. " We

cursed more about that stew than if we had been hit ourselves."

"It beats Banagher," said a jocular private in the Royal Irish, "how these Germans always disturb us at meal times. I suppose it's just the smell of the bacon that they're after. They seem to look for a blooming Ritz Hotel in the firing line."

Men can even sleep when under fire. "It is a most extraordinary thing," said an officer to *The Daily Telegraph* special correspondent, "to see soldiers lying on their straw soundly asleep when German shells are bursting all round them. Men keep on snoring even after a shell has burst within 5 or 6 yards over their heads and half filled their trenches with fresh earth. One gets so used to the firing, that, though it may sound incredible, it soon becomes far less noticeable than city traffic, for instance."

CHAPTER XIII

"I'VE GOT IT"

SOMETIMES a man after being under fire for a considerable time without being wounded begins to fancy that he has a charmed life and that he is "not for it," as soldiers say. Still, if he is to be a billet for a bullet the bullet will in its own time find him out. Then, he who has been seeing comrades falling on either side of him will find this a more personal matter, an affair of his only. When the end comes to a poor fellow he is generally gone to "another place" before he knows he is dead—as an Irish soldier said.

What does the average soldier say or do when wounded, how does he take it? He usually remarks casually and quietly, "I've got it," or "I'm hit." Men speak and act differently according to temperament, according to moral and physical condition. Some as they roll over give a groan and a cry to mother or wife. Some pray, some curse. An officer said, "I'm done for," but immediately thinking of his men told them to lie down. A soldier when hit said, "I've got a ticket through. I'm put

out of mess,” but it was not as bad as that. Another fell and said to a chum : “ Good-bye, old man. I’m done for. Tell poor old dad I died at the front. I began a letter to him ; you finish it.”

Sometimes a soldier is too excited to feel a wound until the fight is over. A man wrote in a letter the following when describing the battle of Mons : “ When the Germans attacked us we were singing ‘ Hitchy Koo.’ Before we were half through the chorus the man next to me got a wound in the upper part of his arm. He sang the chorus to the finish, and did not seem to know he was hit till a comrade on the other side said, ‘ Don’t you think you had better have it bound up ? It’s beginning to make a mess.’ ”

A sergeant sent back to a hospital in England said : “ It was at Ypres I was shot. The bullet struck me in the elbow. I felt no pain there and no sensation of any kind, except in the tops of the fingers, which began to stiffen and freeze. But even then I didn’t know I was shot. Five or ten minutes afterwards my coat began to stick to my arm, thick blood came down my sleeve, and I realised that I was wounded.”

One man, shot through the arm, felt “ only a bit of a sting, nothing particular. Just like a needle going into me. I thought it was nothing till my rifle dropped out of my hand and my arm fell.” That is

the feeling of a clean bullet wound. Shrapnel, however, "hurts pretty badly."

This is how another man in a letter described being hit : "I didn't know what had happened at the time, but afterwards I found out that a bullet had entered my shoulder, grazed my spine, and lodged pretty firmly in the back of my neck. 'Are you wounded, mate ?' asked a corporal who came up to me. 'Looks like it,' I replied, pointing to my shoulder. With that he ripped up the sleeve of my tunic, and had just bound up my wound when a shell struck him full in the back, and he fell forward dead without a word."

A man when hit in the hand jumped out of the trench and shouted to the man who had shot him to come and fight him. "It was hailing lead, so he was pulled back into the trench and told that he was rather amusing, but silly."

Two men are resting in a trench but not lying low enough. One is munching a biscuit, and the other is flicking small pebbles at him. A particularly sharp stone, as the man with the biscuit fancies, strikes him on the neck. He leaps round and demands indignantly, "Say, Bill, did you chuck that stone at me ?" Bill denies the charge, and, perceiving the occasion for it, rejoins, "Why, mate, you're wounded." He had got a bullet and not a harmless pebble.

Firing in battle is now carried on at such long distances that if one is in the neighbourhood at all he may not be able to keep out of it. This was once the case with me in China. A hail of bullets came round us and we did not know from whence it came. A man on the right of me fell and said, “ I'm hit,” and another on the left did the same. As no enemy was visible I thought that it was a grim joke until I saw blood spurting up.

Writing in a letter of a second occasion on which he was wounded, a soldier said : “ This makes twice their shrapnel has pipped me. If they do it again I shall say, ‘ I ain't going to play any more ! You are too rough ! ’ ”

Another man was hit in the right arm when drinking tea. He carefully transferred the pannikin to the left hand, and finished his tea !

When a bullet got him an Irishman, exclaiming “ The brutes have hit me,” fired his rifle and said, “ That's one back ter them.” Then he got hit again and observed, “ Be jabers, if they haven't struck me the second toime.” A third hit was too much and he expostulated, “ That's number three. The blackguards might leave a party alone after they've hit him wance.”

With a machine gun a Highlander at a bridge over the river Marne kept back a column of Germans until reliefs came up. When he fell dead and was

carried away thirty bullet wounds were found on his body.

It is strange to hear soldiers at home talking of soldiers who have gone to war, and have been wounded or died. They seldom express pity for them, nor do they feel much. And the want of what might seem a natural sensation is really very fine, for it is due to a conviction that a man has to do his duty, and that to die in the performance of it covers him with honour.

Strange, too, is the way soldiers can joke when hit themselves, or when someone near them has "got it." In one of the Highland regiments there was a very fat pipe major. His legs were like barrels, and when he was shot in them he said, "Weel, I wonder they didna do that before."

Two chums were discussing the relative values of their birthplaces. The Cockney was evidently having the best of the argument, when a shrapnel shell burst above them and the Londoner received a bullet in each leg, while the Birmingham man escaped unhurt.

"I should think you'll give way now!" said the man from Birmingham.

"Why?" asked the Cockney.

"Well, you haven't a leg to stand on," was the reply.

After a little experience of campaigning in France

a young officer wrote, “ I tried to like war, having heard and read so many fine things about it, but I could not ; it is just beastly.” Any one who talks of the glory of war should be invited to walk over a battle field when the fighting has ceased. He will see those who have “ got it ” from shells or bullets writhing in agony, he will hear many of them asking someone for the love of God to kill them and put them out of their misery.

A member of the Royal Army Medical Corps gives the following vivid picture of a battlefield after the guns had ceased firing :

“ The last fight I was in the carnage had been fearful, and dead and dying of both sides were piled together. In one corner you could see a British Tommy with a bad wound lying with his head pillow'd on the shoulder of a dying German, while a Frenchman near by was doing his best to cheer them up, and emptying his pockets in quest of some treasures to soothe the last moments of the other two. Close by a British Guardsman was propped against a tree smoking a cigarette and gazing intently at a photograph. Near to him was a wounded Frenchman, holding a little glass in one hand while he tried to curl a straggling moustache with the other. Further along I saw two men, a French artilleryman and a British rifleman, quietly playing cards while awaiting their turn to be taken

to hospital. Next to them was a man of the Cameron Highlanders, with both legs shattered, munching a stick of chocolate, and trying to hide the twitching of his face as the pain racked his body. I approached another Highlander. ‘It’s ma birthday the day,’ was what he said, with a wry face, and before the words were right out of his mouth he was dead. Under a little cluster of trees we find a party of wounded Germans, English, and French men. They were quietly praying for what they believed to be the last time on earth. Beyond them a Seaforth Highlander was lying with his Testament open at the story of the Crucifixion. He was beyond human aid.”

How much more than “ beastly ” for the wounded must be the waiting for the stretcher-bearers to pick them up and the fear that they may not be able to come or that they may not find them ? What torture for the mind there is in the uncertainty !

The next time we are impatient because a train is unpunctual or the dinner a few moments late, we should think of those who wait on battlefields, sometimes in danger of getting more wounds and sometimes exposed to great cold and falling rain or snow.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM FEAR TO HEROISM

A COMMON topic in letters from the front is the feeling of the writers on going into battle. They were "half mad with excitement"; they "did not know what they were doing"; they felt "hot and cold, and, as it were, stuck to the ground." One remarks, "If anyone tells you that he is not afraid in his first battle, you may be sure that he is a liar."

In a ball-room a girl was overheard asking an officer, who has shown himself brave above the average, what he felt when he went into his first engagement. "My dear young lady," he replied, "I felt like making for the nearest hedge that would hide me comfortably."

The South African soldier and statesman, Louis Botha, was asked what it was like to be on a field of battle, and whether men rise to the occasion. "That depends," he said "on the spirit of the man."

Speaking of the science of slaughter, of which the present war has been an exhibition, a soldier remarked: "I don't believe there is a man living

who, when first interviewing an 11 in. howitzer shell, is not pink with funk. After the first ten, one gets quite used to them, but really, they are terrible ! ”

When Lord Clive was an ensign, in his first battle he felt almost unable to stand up from fear. Seeing this the captain of his company told him that he used to be that way himself, and then took him by the hand and walked with him where the firing was heaviest. This reassured him, and the great general used to say that no man ever performed a better service for another than this captain did for him.

The bravest soldiers are often the most nervous when they first face an enemy, just as the most eloquent orators are when they begin to speak. This is because men fight and are eloquent by means of nerve power. Each must warm to the work before he gets his nerves under control, and then he astonishes the world, but no one so much as himself.

There is no man so brave as the man who is afraid of being afraid. An officer had a confidential talk a day or two before a battle that was imminent with a subaltern that had just come out. He was delicate looking and nervous. He said that he was a born coward and that he would disgrace himself in his first battle. “ I saw him just before the next fight began, looking pitifully white and haggard, and I never saw him again ; but I heard that he had

fought like a hero, and that he had lost his life in an effort to save one of his men."

"If one did not know you, Colonel," said a subaltern, "one would say you were afraid." "Boy," was the answer, "if you were half as much afraid as I am you would run away."

Shakespeare represents a hero thus speaking to his body before a battle begins :

"Thou tremblest, my poor body, but if thou didst know
Where I will bring you before the day is over
Thou wouldest tremble much more."

This was related by a sergeant of the York and Lancaster Regiment : "Every soldier knows that the first experience of being under fire is terribly unnerving, and the best of men will admit that at times they are tempted to run away. There was a young lad of the Worcestershire Regiment who had this feeling very badly, but he made up his mind that he would conquer it, and this is what he did. He made it a practice to go out of the trench and expose himself to German fire for a bit every day. The poor boy trembled like a leaf, but his soul was bigger than the weak little body holding it, and he went through the terrible ordeal for a week. On the eighth day he was fatally hit. His last words to me were, 'They can't say I was a coward, can they?'"

On one occasion a subaltern of the Munsters was so little afraid of a fight with the Germans that his

only fear was that they would not come on. The regiment was waiting for a night attack, and waited in vain. Hour after hour passed. The men in the trenches who had been warm with excitement began to feel cold again. Yet still no Germans came. At last the subaltern, who had been walking incessantly up and down behind the trenches like a caged lion, could stand it no longer. He glanced anxiously for the twenty-fifth time at his wrist watch and muttered, "I do hope nothing has happened to them!"

A young soldier wrote: "In the first action I went silly and cried for mother ten times, but all of a sudden courage loomed up in me. I thought I could not have enough nerve to stick a man with a bayonet, but during a charge one goes mad."

Much courage is needed to charge with a bayonet, or to face a bayonet charge. Young soldiers sometimes get a sinking sensation when the order to charge is given. It is horrid putting a bayonet into a man, and it is sometimes difficult to get it out of him. "It was his life or mine," said a soldier describing his first battle, "and I ran the bayonet through him. In war mercy is only for the merciful. It is awful killing big, fine men who have done us no harm ; but we do it or they will do it to us."

Private G. Glew, of the Coldstream Guards, wrote : "Once I had my bayonet in a German's shoulder,

and could not get it out sharp enough to keep an eye on the German that was behind me with his bayonet ready for me, when the captain drew his revolver and shot him, saving my life."

Soldiers do not like to talk about what they feel during a battle, but one man did tell a newspaper interviewer that "the sensation of killing a man is not nice. Once done, however, your blood grows hot, and you seem to see all red. A passion unknown in other moments possesses you. The more of your chums you see knocked down, the madder you seem to fight. One gets a kind of bloodthirsty feeling which it is impossible to quell."

Soldiers are nerved to scorn danger from different motives. The highest motive of all is when the "gallant private" who cannot hope for much professional advancement practises his "heroism obscure" simply from a sense of duty. Sometimes ambition urges him on, nor shall we blame him.

A driver in the artillery wrote in a letter home : " We have got some brave men in the British Army, but I saw more than one kneel down and say his prayers the night before a battle was expected." How strange that this man should think that there is any inconsistency between praying and being courageous ! Surely the best way of getting rid of fear is to realise by prayer the presence with us of a Higher Power. In several letters men wrote, after

describing some danger that they had to face, "I prayed then as I never did before in my life."

A young officer once told me that there was no service like the Holy Communion for men who had to face death. He said he felt "square" afterwards.

Religion under fire is not apologetic; it is quietly dominant. Shadow, darkness and doubt vanish. "My God" is the call of the heart, and a sincere call.

CHAPTER XV

UNCOMMON COMBATS

THE following curious bit of war-to-the-knife was related by a sergeant to a newspaper correspondent : " I and four other wounded men got together and hid under some wheat sheaves. Presently one man put out his head to see if the coast was clear, and was spotted by a German soldier. The fellow came towards us, and, grasping his rifle by the barrel, was about to batter out my mate's brains, when I whipped this out (producing a formidable jack-knife) and, springing up, jabbed it into his throat. See, the blood stains are still there. He went down and I with him, and by the time I had finished with this little weapon he was done for. I kept at his windpipe so as not to give him a chance to bawl for assistance. We managed to crawl or limp for some distance in the wake of the army until we came upon Lieutenant B. M. B. Bateman, of the Royal Field Artillery. He helped us to safety."

A knock-out blow was thus described by a young

Frenchman, attached to the Interpreters' Corps : " Last week my parents had a pleasant surprise. I took home to supper one of your brave Tommies. I met him as interpreter, and he told me his story. He fought the Boches (nickname for the Germans) from the beginning of the war, and was at Mons, Charleroi, Landrecies, Soissons, and the battles of the Marne and Aisne. On October 15th he was captured by a German patrol, composed of six Uhlans, and was disarmed, but kept his horse. Three of the six went to get some tea, one went for an interpreter, and two watched Tommy. After a short time one of the two lay down on the grass, while the other stood by the side of their prisoner. Tommy was still for a quarter of an hour, and he then suddenly gave the Boche an ' uppercut,' and he fell exhausted. The other Boche got up and went for him, but the English Tommy knocked him out with the first blow, and jumped on his horse. The other Boches had heard the struggle, and as he rode off the bullets whistled past his ears, but luckily he escaped. I asked him if he was a boxer, and he answered me, ' Rather ! I matched with my cousin Fred Welsh, who is now a world champion in the light weights ! ' "

Corporal Isherwood, 2nd Manchester Regiment, when he came home wounded, told how a boy led his regiment in a bayonet charge. " On October

20th the Germans were all around us, and their fire enfiladed our trenches. First our lieutenant was wounded, then the sergeant, and we were left without a single officer to command the platoon. We were wondering what to do when a drummer-boy, of eighteen, the baby of the company, threw up his cap, and with a ringing cheer yelled : ' Fix bayonets, lads.' We did, and charged the advancing Germans. The boy was in the act of bayoneting a German when the latter shouted, ' For God's sake, don't stick me.' ' It is too late,' returned the youngster, ' it is through you.' "

Corporal Gleeson, of the Coldstream Guards, tells this story :

" At Soissons our attention was attracted by a young lad of the Connaught Rangers. He was fighting single-handed against seven Germans. He was doing nicely, but just as he was withdrawing his bayonet from the fifth German to go down, one of them caught him, and he dropped. We fought our way over, and finished the other two, and just managed to catch the poor lad before his last breath went. ' You saw it,' he said, and we said we had. ' You think I did my best, and they won't blame me because seven was too many for me ? I'm only a boy, and they were such big chaps.' We told him if any man said or hinted he hadn't done his best, and more, there wasn't one of

us wouldn't kill him. He smiled ever so sweetly, and then he died. We drew our coat sleeves across our eyes to stop or hide the blinding tears that came in spite of us."

The London Scottish Regiment gave a good account of themselves in their first fight, and showed that for pluck and dash this "crack" regiment of Territorials—the first Territorial corps to take their place in the firing line—has nothing to learn from even the pick of the Regulars. They were ordered to dislodge from an important position a large body of the much vaunted Bavarian troops, and they did it in a way that Sir John French highly praised.

On one occasion the Kaiser, when addressing a Bavarian corps, said, "I want the Bavarians to meet the British—just once!" The Bavarians have met the British, represented by the London Scottish, "just once," and it was once too often for them.

Before the war the Germans used to say that God had given British soldiers long legs to run away with, and that men in kilts instead of trousers could not fight. They know better now, and the London Scottish greatly helped to enlighten them.

Shouting "Remember you're Scottish, give them the bayonet!" the London Scottish rushed into the village they had to take. The defenders resisted

with great obstinacy, but at last they broke and fled.

On the next day the regiment had, without adequate cover, to hold a position in face not only of infantry, but of artillery fire. At the end of the day it was necessary to retire through a storm of lead, and they marched back as steadily as on parade. "A perfect hell, it was," said an eyewitness, "and the wonder is that any of them got back."

The noise of bag-pipes must be very terrifying to those who hear it for the first time, and it seems on one occasion to have been instrumental in winning for some men of another Scotch regiment a bloodless battle. On a dark, rainy night the men making a detour of a field of roots and, stalking their prey as silently as cats, got up to a position from which the enemy had to be ejected. Then the Scots yelled, let off rifles, rattled tins, and made the bagpipes speak up or rather squeal up. The Germans were not soothed by the charms of this music, but were seized with panic and fled.

Private S. A. Geary, R.A.M.C., wrote the following: "I was near the trenches against which the Kaiser sent his crack Guard Corps, the picked men of his army. Several times they got right up to the trenches but were hurled back by the bayonet. One young officer did a magnificent bit of work.

Nothing could stop him ; he jumped out of his trench and yelled, ‘ Old England for ever ! Follow me, lads.’ With half a company he dashed forward for quite 50 yards, and he and his men simply performed miracles. As I watched them I was spellbound. They seemed to possess superhuman strength. Caked from head to foot in mud they presented the most fearful picture that could be imagined as they attacked like wild beasts. The big Germans were rushing on four to one, but they could not beat our fellows back. Those who were not killed or wounded got away to shelter, and our boys returned to their trenches cheering and shouting. Five minutes later the Germans came again and again, but not a single man got within 10 yards of the trenches.”

One of the Scots Greys, when invalided home, told of fighting with frying-pans. “ A dozen or so Germans who must have lost their way, came stumbling into our camp after dark and received quite a warm welcome. No guns were handy, but we grabbed hold of the first things handy, and as it was supper-time there were plenty of domestic articles which proved their worth. Dixey-tins and frying-pans, containing our supper, were banged on their heads until they had had enough and gave themselves up to our tender care.”

A detachment of British cavalry, while playing

water polo in the Oise, suddenly spotted a patrol of German Uhlans. The British, naked as they were, jumped on their horses and charged the enemy.

A private of the East Surrey Regiment recorded this grim experience : " Suddenly, out of the darkness, a German appeared near, making straight for me with a fixed bayonet. He came right above me as I stood in the trench, and thrust his bayonet down towards my face. I just managed to catch hold of it with my left hand pushing it from me, and at the same time I thrust my own bayonet up into the German. His rifle went off as he fell down on top of me, and the bullet went into my left hand."

It would seem from the following that a combat caused by love is very severe. " There were two men of the Connaught Rangers who had a row about a girl. Under ordinary circumstances they would have gone to the back of the trenches and settled it with their fists, but the regimental peacemaker intervened with a suggestion that struck both as being reasonable. It was that instead of spoiling each other's beauty they should take it out of the Germans, and let the girl decide which was the better man of the two when the facts were put before her by a comrade. They agreed, and that day they went into action with more than usual eagerness. When it came to close quarters each of these chaps fought all he knew against as many Germans as he

could find to stand up against him. We all knew what was behind it, and so did not go to their assistance, but when the day was over everybody agreed that the one who had downed eight Germans without getting a scratch was the better man of the two. The girl thought otherwise, for she decided in favour of the chap who got badly wounded in his fight with the sixth German."

A corporal, named W. R. Smith, who has returned from the war, tells of a chivalrous duel that took place between himself and one of the enemy. On one occasion the corporal had got close to a German, and both levelled their rifles. The corporal pulled the trigger first, but the weapon jammed. The German, seeing what had happened, lowered his rifle and offered to give him another chance. "Of course," says the corporal, "there was nothing for it but to shake hands and walk away from each other."

A Royal Engineer told this story in reference to the mole-like manner of attacking the enemy's trenches : "We spent two days on a long mine out towards the German lines, and just when we were getting to the close of our job we heard pickaxes going as fast and hard as you like, and then the wall of clay before us gave way, showing a party of Germans at the same game! You never saw men more astonished in your life, and they hadn't quite

recovered from their shock when we pounced on them. We had a pretty sharp scrap down there indeed, but we got the best of it, though we had four of our chaps laid out. One German devil was just caught in time with a fuse which he was going to apply with the mad idea of blowing us all up ! ”

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE TRENCHES

"PUNCH" represents a soldier newly arrived at the front asking, "What's the programme?" An old hand in the trenches answers, "Well, you lie down in this water, and you get peppered all day and night, and you have the time of your life!" The new arrival remarks, "Sounds like a bit of all right; I'm on it!"

This was a joke, but it was very like what our soldiers seem to have felt. One of them, for instance, in the Durham Light Infantry, wrote: "We are in the thick of it, and enjoying it. We had an engagement on Sunday, and managed to drive back the enemy. We are still at it, but as happy as sandboys. When I read in books of the coolness of men under fire I thought somebody was blathering, but after eight weeks of it I can say that no book has ever done justice to the coolness of British soldiers under conditions that would try anybody. The night I was hit we were just leaving the trenches for an interview with some Germans who were trying

some of their fancy tricks about our left. As we stood up there was a ghastly shower of bullets and shells bursting all round. Into it we had to go, and as we looked ahead one of our chaps said, 'I think we'll have to get our great coats, boys; it's raining bullets to-night, and we'll get wet to the skin if we're not careful.' Men of C company started laughing, and then they took to singing, 'Put up your umbrella when it comes on wet.' The song was taken up all along as we went into the thick of it, and some of us were humming it as we dashed into the German trenches. The Germans must have thought us a mad crew. Another day there was an officer of the Cheshire Regiment who was a bit of a cricketer in his day. He got uncomfortable after lying in the trenches for so long, and he raised his leg in shifting his position. He was hit in the thigh, and as he fell back all he said was, 'Out, by George! leg-before-the-wicket, as the umpire would say. Better luck next innings.' "

A trooper of the 15th Hussars wrote: "The horror of the nights spent in the trenches in our soaking wet clothes will never leave me while life lasts. The bare thought of it sends rheumatic pains all through me. We minded that more than the German fire, but you must understand that this isn't a grouse. Soldiers know that they have to put up with that sort of thing in war time, and our officers were no

better off. Some of them were worse. There was an officer of the artillery who gave up his blanket to a poor devil who had the shivers something awful. The officer caught pneumonia and died a week later at the base hospital. One night, when it was unusually wet and miserable, and some of us had got all the humps that were ever seen on a camel's back, the assembly sounded, and we were paraded at midnight. We fell in, glad to have something to take us away from our miserable surroundings. Talk about fight ? Why, we fought like demons. We had all got the 'get at 'em' fever."

A private of the West Kent Regiment wrote to his brother : " We have been living the life of rabbits, for we burrowed ourselves in trenches at —, and here we remained for over fifty hours. It was an exciting and not unpleasant experience. The bursting of shells overhead was continuous, and it became monotonous. One chap used to raise a cheer each time shrapnel and shell spoke, making such remarks as ' There's another rocket, John.' "

Another when hit in the knee calmly remarked, " I can't play now on Christmas Day for Maidstone United."

" If all goes well we are going to have a football match to-morrow, as I have selected a team from our lot to play the Borderers, who are always swanking what they can do."

"There's a corporal of a regiment, that I won't name, that was a ticket collector on the railway before the war, and when he was called back to the colours he wasn't able to forget his old trade. One day he was in charge of a patrol that surprised a party of Germans in a wood, and, instead of the usual call to surrender, he sang out, 'Tickets, please !' The Germans seemed to understand what he was driving at, for they surrendered at once, but that chap will never hear the end of the story, for when everything else ceases to amuse in the trenches you have only to shout out 'Tickets, please !' to set everybody in fits."

An officer wrote : "We did seventy-eight hours on end in the trenches last spell. This morning we had a football match. Football is the only thing that takes the stiffness out of the men after being long in the trenches. They are such sportsmen."

A Scottish Borderer described life in the trenches in the following extract from a letter : "To kill time we played banker with cigarette cards. We become rather like schoolboys over food. One of our mess had a small tin of biscuits sent through the post yesterday ; we all crowded over it just like youngsters. One's joys are of the primitive type when, like our ancestors, we turn to live in the fields and woods again. A padre turned up yesterday, and at night (it was not safe to begin earlier) we held

a service at which a great number of our men attended. We are a light-hearted lot and so are our officers. We dug out for them a kind of a subterranean mess-room where they took their meals. One fellow decorated it with a few cigarette cards and some pictures he had cut out of a French paper. Their grub was not exactly what they would get at the Cecil. A jollier and kinder lot of officers you would not meet in a day's march. One officer who was well stocked with cigarettes divided them among his men, and we were able to repay him for his kindness by digging him out from his mess-room. A number of shells tore up the turf, and the roof and sides collapsed like a castle built of cards, burying him and two others. They were in a nice pickle, but we got them out safe and sound. There are apple trees over our trench, and we have to wait till the Germans knock them down for us. You ought to see us scramble down our holes when we hear a shell coming."

The experience of ten days in the trenches was thus described : "We dig ourselves deeper and deeper into the earth, till we are completely sheltered from above, coming out now and then, when things are quiet, to cook and eat, making any moves that may be necessary under cover of darkness. Ammunition, food, and drinking water are brought in by night ; the wounded are sent away to the hospital.

We do not wash, we do not change our clothes ; we sleep at odd intervals whenever we can get the chance, and daily we get more accustomed to our lot. It is rather an odd existence. Little holes dug beneath the parapet just big enough to sit in are our homes, with straw and perhaps a sack or two for warmth. The cold is intense at night, and those good ladies who have made us woollen caps and comforters have earned our thanks ; also, we are getting used to it. The coldest moments are those when there is an alarm of a night attack, and we spring from our sleep to stand shivering behind the parapet peering over the wall to see our enemies, and firing at the flashes of their rifles. It is exciting. Every time you put as much as your little finger over a trench there is a hail of bullets."

A regiment was in trenches under fire and returning it. Two privates noticed that the French interpreter was placed at a spot where the trench was not wide enough to enable him to make proper use of his rifle. "The Frenchman isn't comfortable," said one, and both left the trench, spade in hand, knowing well that they were serving the enemy as targets, dug out the trench in front of their French comrade, and returned with unbroken calm to their own places and their rifles.

There was a humorous attempt to be homelike. A sergeant-major by the name of Kenilworth put

outside his bivouac "Kenilworth Lodge. Tradesmen's entrance at the back. Beware of the dog." The dog was picked up at Rouen.

Other shelters were named Hotel Cecil, Ritz Hotel, Billet Doux, Villa De Dug Out, etc. Soldiers called the ordinary trenches, "Little wet homes in a sewer."

Lieut. H. J. S. Shields, R.A.M.C., described his experiences in the trenches in a letter to his father. "The Germans have a battery of four guns six miles off, firing a 90lb. shell very accurately. It makes a terrible bang, a miniature earthquake, and leaves a hole 4ft. deep and 20ft. in circumference. We had about 40 within 100 yards of us this afternoon, the nearest about five yards off. Two of them have been christened 'Weeping Willy' and 'Calamity Jane.' You can hear the shell screaming towards you. With a cry of 'Here comes Jane!' all dive into their respective holes. As a matter of fact, except for two occasions, when it killed and wounded about eighty men altogether, it is less dangerous than the shrapnel, which hails once or twice an hour. Two medical officers have been killed up here, and two wounded; one had his leg blown off by 'Jane.' I make a point of entirely disregarding fire when it comes to the point of seeing to a wounded man, and pay no attention to it. I don't believe precautions, beyond the ordinary one of not exposing yourself more than can be helped, do any good, and I am

rather a fatalist. After all, I always think if one is killed doing one's duty one can't help it, and it is the best way of coming to an end. I mentally repeat that to myself when I am getting plugged at. Somehow, I don't feel that God means me to get killed, though before I came out I had a conviction I should not come back alive."

Quartermaster-Sergeant A. W. Harrison, 1st Battalion King's Liverpool Regiment, wrote : " Of course we are ready to move forward at short notice, but I am afraid the first three months have played havoc with one's nerves. No description of mine could give you even a faint impression of the present war. Can you imagine one living, day in day out, for three or four weeks in a trench 6ft. deep by 3ft. wide, with such cover as one can make with a few branches and a little straw, not daring to leave it except for counter-attack, smuggling in your food and ammunition under cover of darkness, and perhaps being shelled hours at a time without seeing a single foe ? Fancy not shaving nor even washing for this length of time ! If you can imagine all that you will have just an inkling of what not only the private but the officer as well has to undergo. Certainly there has never been less than three to one against us. Yet, thank God ! the Liverpools' line has never been broken. Compliments from our General have been showered on us, but I have seen very little mention

of us in the British Press. Our men laugh and say, 'What! Do you want jam on it?' They refer to the way some of the favourite battalions have been lauded for events which have been almost everyday occurrences with us."

A private of the Royal Scots wrote to his wife : " We were thirteen days in the trenches at one place, where we only had to stand up a minute to bring a battery of German artillery on the top of us, and for hours we had to lie still or be blown to atoms. But never mind, the sun will shine again."

A British soldier described in a letter a curious Sunday morning occurrence : " While the shells were flying we heard the most impressive music. There were strains like hymns, several hundred voices evidently taking part. We listened, missing not a bar except when a shell fell and deafened us for a moment, and then we discovered that it was a big body of Germans holding some sort of Sabbath festival at the other side of the little village, hardly two hundred yards away. One section of them was firing shells ; the other was singing hymns ; and we were playing nap ! "

Sergeant Harlow, of the Connaught Rangers, wrote the following in a letter : " When we were in the trenches a chum of mine, Johnnie Salmon, said that we would be the better of a cup of tea. At the time there was a heavy artillery fusilade from the

enemy's lines. To make the tea Salmon had to enter a deserted house close to the trenches. The water in the kettle had reached boiling point, and he was about to make the tea, when crash came a 'Jack Johnson' and whipped the roof from the house. Fortunately Salmon when he extricated himself from the debris found he was uninjured, and walking over to me he nonchalantly remarked, 'The next time you want tea, Harlow, you can go and make it yourself.' He was apparently more annoyed at having lost the tea than startled at his narrow escape."

Rifleman Edward Strong wrote to his mother : " Since I served my apprenticeship as a bootmaker I have had many strange jobs, but I don't think I've ever had anything to equal my experience last week, when I had to mend the boots of my chums in the trenches under fire. It was exciting work. Just when I was heelng one boot a shell dropped near by, and I had to run for it. When I came back the boot had disappeared, and you can bet the chap it belonged to was very cross over it. I offered to get him a new pair of boots from one of the Germans lying dead over the way, but he wouldn't be pacified. As you may imagine, there is great difficulty in getting leather for work of this kind, but we solve it by collecting the boots from the dead and cutting them up for making necessary repairs."

CHAPTER XVII

NOT DOWNHEARTED

FREQUENTLY in the midst of a heavy German fire some British joker would shout, "Are we downhearted?" and this would be loudly answered in the negative by all British soldiers near him. Certainly that soldier was not downhearted who pasted "Business as Usual" on a biscuit tin, and stuck it on top of his trench for the enlightenment of the enemy.

The Hampshire Regiment, when advancing against the Germans, sang "Pop goes the Weasel" as each shell burst.

Another regiment went into battle shouting, "Early doors this way. Early doors ninepence." They were all as cheerful as if they were going to a football match. One soldier said that he got his wound because he became too excited to take cover when arguing about the relative qualities of two famous boxers.

Two soldiers in the trenches when shells were

bursting round them played marbles with bullets from a shrapnel shell.

On one occasion our men, though being fired at by artillery, were kicking about a football. A German aviator who observed this sent in a report that the British forces were thoroughly disorganised and running about their post in blind alarm.

Many men remarked casually in their letters that the letters were written with bullets and shrapnel flying round. One soldier told his mother that his letter was deferred "because the Germans were trying to worry us," but added, "Do not believe half the stories about our hardships. I haven't seen or heard of a man who made complaint of anything. You can't expect a six-course dinner on active service, but we get plenty to fight on."

A *Times* correspondent told how he asked a wounded British soldier who was sitting on the roadside if his wound hurt him. He replied, "It's not that, but I'm blest if I haven't lost my pipe in that last charge."

The same correspondent saw a number of British soldiers come to Paris after a "terrible tussle" with the enemy, and said that they looked as if they had arrived from a day's holiday on Hampstead Heath, for though dusty, they were trim and smiling, and seemed to be fit for anything.

The excitable Parisians admired the way Mr.

Thomas Atkins took everything as a matter of course and accommodated himself to circumstances. They shrieked with admiration when they saw two Highlanders with arms wounded dance a reel on a railway platform.

In another part of France a train full of British soldiers arrived. A Frenchman said to some of them, "Bravo! You have done splendid work, I hope that you will soon get home." "Home, sir?" replied a gunner, "why we're just getting warmed up for work. It took us a few weeks to get used to it, but now we love it and are as fit as fiddles."

"What is it like at the front?" a private of the Royal Irish Fusiliers was asked in a hospital in England. "Well, now it's hard to tell you that unless you've been there, but, faith, I'll make a good try, just to oblige you. It's very little different from what goes on at home. The day's made up of grousing and fighting, except that instead of fighting among ourselves it's the Germans we fight. Maybe the grousing's a bit different, too, from what it is in peace time. The Englishmen swear most when the meals aren't all they might be, but the Scotch and the Irish are mostly angered because the German devils won't come out and fight so's we can give them the cold iron. The English don't seem to mind that so much, so long as they have full stomachs

and can keep firing away at the Germans with the big guns and the rifles."

Corporal Graham Hodson, Royal Engineers, wrote to his parents : " I am feeling awfully well, and am enjoying myself no end. Oh, it's a great life ! " So little downhearted were his men that an officer, after observing them, said admiringly, " You are a lively lot of beggars. You don't seem to realise that we are at war."

One man, however, thought it well to give the inexperienced a little warning. He was a wounded soldier who was travelling in a train. At a point on the line where it ran parallel with the road he saw a brand new Territorial battalion marching up to the front. He stuck his bandaged head out of the door and yelled, " Are you dahn'earted ? " The Terriers, from the colonel to the smallest drummer, shouted, " No-o-oh ! " The wounded man replied, " Well, you — soon will be when you get in those trenches."

When they were being heavily shelled a regiment shouted to their comrades in some distant trenches, " Are we downhearted ? " A pause ensued, then a bloody spectre raised himself from a trench, shouted " No ! " with a last breath and fell back dead.

It is a curious fact in the Army that the harder the conditions the more cheerful the men are. When everything is all right there is grumbling, but as

soon as things are bad they all get as happy as sandboys.

The "wild pulsation of strife" seems to be a "rapture" to some, and that soldier no doubt meant what he said when he wrote to his parents, "You can't believe how happy I was fighting the Germans. I felt as if I were in a football match."

A wounded soldier said that there was a fascination in battle that made him wish to be in one again. "You forget all fear, everybody is full of excitement. You hardly think of your funeral."

An officer wrote, after describing the terrible marches our troops had to make in their strategic retirement to the neighbourhood of Paris: "Our long ordeal came to a sudden end. For reasons we could not understand the Germans were retreating on our left and forsaking the tempting bait of Paris. On September 5th we got the order to advance, and instantly new life flowed into our veins. It is amazing how speedily we forgot our fatigue and the mental and physical horrors we had gone through. Though their feet were sore and many of them bleeding, the men stepped back to the Marne singing, 'It's a long, long way to Tipperary,' or the new version, 'It's a wrong, wrong way to tickle Mary.'"

Sir Douglas Haig, the General who led so well

in the retreat, had good reason for saying, "We have had hardish times, but nothing in our history has surpassed the fine soldierly qualities displayed by the troops."

CHAPTER XVIII

PLAY AND WORK

So well did our soldiers keep up their spirits that they were always ready for a little play even when engaged in hard work and fighting. Here is an instance given by a Coldstream Guardsman : " We were down to the last cigarette in a box that had done the company for a week. There was a fight to get it, but the sergeant-major said we would have to shoot for it like the King's Prize at Bisley. It was to go to the man hitting most Germans in fifty shots. A corporal was sent up a tree to signal hits and misses as best he could. Half the company entered, and the prize was won by a chap who had twenty-three hits. The runner-up had twenty-two, and as a sort of consolation prize he was allowed to sit near while the winner smoked the cigarette. He said being near the smoke was better than nothing."

Seven men of the Worcestershire Regiment were able to do a little business one day when they were told they could go for a stroll. They encountered

a party of Germans, and captured them all without firing a shot. It was so simple. "We just covered them with our rifles and they surrendered."

Few of us take our easy work in time of peace in the playful spirit which was shown by our soldiers in the trying experiences of the trenches. This is what an officer wrote : "For three weeks we remained near the Aisne, east of Soissons, taking our turn in the trenches in shifts of four days and nights with two days' rest south of the river. We made the most wonderful trenches. The men called them the rabbit warren and themselves rabbits, and when the big guns gave ten seconds' warning they cried out, 'Here comes the gamekeeper,' and darted into their holes."

A soldier invalided home told of this mixture of play with work, or of work with play. "I got my wound in a fight that you will never hear of in official despatches, because it was a little affair of our own. It was what you might call a night attack. We had some leisure in our position along the Aisne, and there was a little village near our lines where we used to go for a bit of a lark. One night, coming back—there were about ten of us—we were surprised to find a light in an empty farmhouse, and were still more surprised to find sounds of revelry coming out through the window. We peeped in, and there were about fifty Germans

drinking and eating and smoking, and generally trying to look as if they were having a jolly old time. A daredevil of an Irishman suggested that we ought to give the Germans a little surprise, and we were all in with him. Doing our best to look fierce and create the impression that we had at least a brigade behind us, we flung open the door without any ceremony. Our first rush was for the passage, where most of the Germans had stacked their rifles, and from there we were able to cover the largest party in any one room. They were so taken aback that they made very little resistance. The only chap who showed any fight was a big fellow, who had good reason to fear us, for he had escaped the day before after being arrested as a spy. He whipped out a revolver, and some of his chums drew swords, but we fired into them, and they threw up their hands, after one had sent a revolver bullet through my arm. We fastened them up securely, collected all the smokes and grub they had not touched, and marched them off to the camp."

A soldier wrote : " One day last week we were on the move, and were about as hungry as men could be, when we came on a party of Uhlans just about to sit down to a dinner, which had been prepared for them at a big house. They looked as if they had had too much of a good time lately, and wanted

thinning down, so we took them prisoners, and let them watch us enjoying their dinner. They didn't like it at all, and one of them muttered something about an English pig. The baby of the troop asked him outside to settle it with the fists, but he wasn't having it. After the best dinner I've had in my life we went round to where the Uhlans had commandeered the supplies, and offered to pay, but the people were so pleased that we had got the food instead of the Germans that they wouldn't hear of payment."

On another occasion Uhlans were driven out of their "supper room" by a small body of our cavalry. They left a finely-cooked repast of beef-steaks, onions and fried potatoes all ready and done to a turn, with about fifty bottles of Pilsener lager beer, which was an acceptable relish.

It was as good as a play when some of our soldiers were looking at and wishing for walnuts, and a German shell came and knocked them off the tree for them.

On another occasion when a German shell had set some wood on fire they cooked their food on the opportune flame.

A bombardier, R.F.A., wrote : "We were unable to sleep for the pouring rain, and sat at a big camp fire with hot tea and rum. The boys asked me to sing 'Annie Laurie,' and I was never in better

voice. When I finished there were officers, and even the staff officers, who had come over the field in the rain to join in. They were nearly all Scotch, and 'Annie Laurie,' after all, is to a Scot what the 'Marseillaise' is to a Frenchman. One fellow was singing 'Boiled Beef and Carrots,' when a bullet came and knocked his cap off. An officer nearly died of laughing."

"The labour that delights us physics pain," as the corporal of the Garrison Artillery found, who wrote of his work: "There is something terribly fascinating about this sort of thing, and every day brings some new excitement and experience. I feel more the hardened old veteran each day, and don't care a straw where they send us. I may not tell you where we are, but I am proud to say we have seen as much sport as most of them. We are being looked after splendidly. Our officers are all kindness and consideration. The major is a typical warrior, and a thorough sport (as you well know). We don't care where he leads us, we are so fond of him."

When at one place the German searchlights were turned on the British lines and an artillery fusillade began, a man of the Middlesex Regiment shouted to his comrade, "I say, Bill, it's just like a play an' us in the limelight." The enemy had not got the range accurately, and so little was the effect of the fire that some of our men laughed loudly and held

up their caps on the end of their rifles to give the German gunners "a bit of encouragement."

Rifleman Horace Copley, 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifles, wrote: "Such a good joke! The Germans have just fired over forty shells at what they think is a line of trenches. There is a biscuit tin flashing in the sun, and they think it is a heliograph. Some joker has fixed the tin, and they fired at it all day yesterday, exploding thousands of pounds' worth of big shells. But the tin is still flashing. Ha, ha!"

If on this occasion the failure of the Germans caused amusement, on another occasion the success of our gunners (so hideous is war) did the same. "The officer in charge," said a looker-on, "gave the order to fire to the gunners, and no sooner was the order given than it was carried out. What made me laugh was every now and then the officer would say, 'There are some Germans over there,' and the reply from the gunner was, 'All right, sir, I'll soon have them down,'; then he started firing the gun, and had them down in a few seconds."

Even out of the fighting at Mons, Bandsman Wall, and others of the Connaught Rangers, got all the fun of a fair. "We had nothing to do but shoot the Germans as they came up, just like knocking dolls down at the fair ground. Some of our men are beginning to fancy themselves as marksmen.

If they don't hit every time they think they ought to see a doctor about it."

So playfully did our soldiers take their work that a man had a football tied to him as he marched to battle.

Another could not help writing almost all his letter home in football terms : " The great match for the European Cup is still being played out, and I daresay there's a record gate, though you can't see the spectators from the field. That's one of the rules of the game when this match is on. In spite of all their swank the Germans haven't scored a goal yet, and they're simply kicking at the ball any way in their blind rage at not being able to score. Our team is about as fit as you could have them, and they're all good men, though some of them are amateurs and the Germans are all 'pros.' The German forwards are a rotten pack. They have no dash worth talking about, and they come up the field as though they were going to the funeral of their nearest and dearest. When they are charged they nearly always fall away on to their backs, and their goalkeeping's about the rottenest thing you ever set eyes on. I wouldn't give a brass farthing for their chances of lifting the Cup, and if you have any brass to spare you can put it on the Franco-British team, who are scoring goals so fast that we haven't time to stop and count them. The

Kaiser makes a rotten captain for any team, and it's little wonder they are losing. Most of our side would like to tell him what they think of him and his team."

Mr. Harold Ashton, of *The Daily News and Leader*, showed to a Horse Artillery gunner a copy of that paper. "Where's the sporting news?" asked the artilleryman as he glanced over the pages. "Shot away in the war," replied Mr. Ashton. "What!" exclaimed Tommy, "not a line about the Arsenal? Well, I'm blowed! This *is* a war!"

One day men of the Lincoln Regiment had a game of football, and French soldiers looked on. During the game a German aeroplane came over and dropped a few bombs, but no one was injured. The game was stopped and there was a rush for the rifles. They fired, but did not succeed in winging the aeroplane, and a French machine gun was brought into action. It finished the aeroplane and the game was continued. The Frenchmen cheered and said, "You English are very misunderstandable. Fancy playing football when German bombs are dropping from the skies!"

The difficulty is, however, as one football devotee explained, that "you can never count on getting your team together. Only the other day I was talking to four of our best men when bang came

a big shell, and when I picked myself up I couldn't see a trace of them—blown to atoms like that."

Football is difficult in such circumstances, but think of the spirit which enables the men to play it at all!

The following amused those in the trenches who heard it. Some of our gunners having lost their way at night wandered about until they were ready to drop with fatigue. Then in the darkness they ran into a detachment of cavalry posted near a wood. They could not make out the colour of their uniform and feared that they were Germans. Their relief was great when one of the cavalry shouted out, "Where the hell do you think you are going to?" "I do not approve of swear words," said the gunner who related the adventure, "but I was more than glad to hear one then. It made us know that we were with friends."

"Yarns" like this are spun by those who have to watch or who have nothing to do but wait and see. There is always a funny man to raise a laugh, and not infrequently rival jesters enter into competition. There are rhymesters, too, and they try to put into crude verse and apply to a well-known air something that has happened on the previous day. If a private has lost the photograph of the girl he left behind him, he cannot get consolation from his best friend, for the whole company would hear of it and sing about it.

Sometimes their work led the troops to a little bit of sport. "We billeted for two days at a place two days' march from Belgium and had a pretty good time bathing and—what was most amusing—fishing in a small pond for 'tiddlers.' I and a chum went to a woman at a house and, making her understand the best way we could, begged some cotton and a couple of pins. We had a couple of hours fishing and captured quite two dozen, although before long lots of our chaps caught the complaint and did the same as we did, causing much amusement. I suppose that French woman had to buy a new stock of cotton, but she was a good sort and was as much amused as the soldiers."

CHAPTER XIX

WAR AS A GAME

IT has been said that war is a game at which kings would not play if their subjects were wise, and the German nation was certainly not wise when it allowed its Emperor to make war against the world. Germans, however, do not think of war as a game at all, but as a most serious, even moral thing, and they are indignant with our soldiers for applying to its grim experiences the common terms of sport, and especially of football.

It is this sporting spirit of our soldiers that enables them to fight gamely and to die gamely. Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield) said of the House of Commons that it was "dull with some great moments." The same may be said of war, and our men forgive its dangers and dullness for the sake of its great moments.

In one engagement the Royal Highlanders jumped out of the trenches and charged "as if they were kicking off in a Cup-tie final." They commenced

to shout, "On the ball, Highlanders!" and "Mark your men!" They continued yelling to one another until they had driven the Germans back. Who can say that "Mark your men!" did not have a stimulating effect upon the Highlanders?

"Dodging shells and bullets," wrote Sapper Anderson, R.E., "is far more exciting than dodging footballers."

A subaltern wrote: "I adore war. It is like a big picnic; I have never been so well or so happy. We are enjoying all the benefits of a Continental holiday. It has done me a world of good coming out here."

A private of the 3rd Worcester Regiment wrote: "In the trenches the British are excelling themselves as men of stamina, for, believe me, it is killing work; perfect murder, in fact. Yet they hardly ever complain. Six men and an officer had to go into hospital with frostbite, and my feet have not got the circulation back yet. Never mind, we must keep up our reputation as British soldiers, and stick it. The snow has gone again, and it is up to your neck in mud in the trenches. I have had one or two pack ponies to look after, but I have thrown up the job, as it was too tame. I prefer being with the company in the firing line, as I felt lost being with the transport and no shells flying over it. It makes you long for your chums after being with

them all the time. We play football with German helmets, which are all over the place."

A young officer who had been fighting ever since the beginning of the war was ordered a month's leave for the sake of his health. "I've got a month," he said to a correspondent, "but I rather fancy I shall be back in a week. It's fine to be at home again—and—and—all that. But when you've once been in the thick of the game it holds you like a magnet. I'm only a few miles away from the hot stuff now, but I am already beginning to feel the pull of that magnet I'm off to bed. Funny sensation going upstairs! We've been diving into bed for weeks and weeks—rabbit holes for cots and straw (if you are lucky) for counterpanes, and the only chambermaids we've had to knock us up in the morning have been the 12 lb. shells. Good-night!"

Some of our men were defending a café at the battle of Mons. In the café there was an automatic piano, and when they first saw the enemy coming one soldier said to another: "Put a penny in the slot, Jack, and give them some music to dance to." So every time there was a German attack after that the "band" struck up. They fought, eye-witnesses declared, as though it was a new and delightful kind of game they had discovered.

Lieutenant C. A. E. Chudleigh, who is serving with the Indian Force, says in a letter: "One usually

spends most of one's slack hours in terrific efforts to dig oneself out of several layers of grime, and it is a job, too, with nothing but scrubbing soap and cold water out of a ditch. It sounds awful to you I expect, but it isn't really as bad as it sounds. For one thing we are getting so used to it, and if approached in the true holiday spirit it really becomes quite a sort of picnic. No rotting ! I really have thoroughly enjoyed the last few weeks since we have been here. I don't think I have had so many jolly good laughs in my life. It is a funny thing that, on looking back, I think I have spent most of my life in search of excitements and interesting scenes and people, and now I have found them in profusion. It is as good as a cinematograph."

Speaking of dispatch-riding in the war, a motorcyclist said to a reporter, "I've never really lived till I came to the war. We have to rough it at times, but the fun we have is simply gorgeous. Yesterday a shell (he laughed much when he said this) came down about fifty yards from me, but I got through with my dispatches without a scratch. This is splendid work for the nut who wants an outlet for his high spirits."

And our Indian troops get equal enjoyment from the game. A dusky warrior being asked how he liked being in action replied, " Sahib, all wars are beautiful, but this one is heavenly."

At the beginning of winter at the front, games were arranged for leisure days and evenings. There were to be inter-trench and inter-army football matches. A Battle Hunt Club was formed, and a pack of foxhounds brought over from England. A phonograph company sent songs, which, with the aid of field telephones, could be "turned on" to any trench at any time.

We suspect that it is chiefly young soldiers and new arrivals at the front who think of war as a game. The game must seem to be played out when winter days have to be passed in cold wet trenches, when frost bites, when wounds are inflicted, when food and other supplies are delayed. Many poor soldiers must echo the sentiment of one of their number who wrote at the end of a letter, "I must admit that I shall not be sorry when peace comes. A little of the game of war goes a long way. At first it is interesting, but the horror and foolishness of it I shall never get over."

The following extract from a letter of a young officer to his parents suggests that the pleasures of war, depending as they do on excitement, are, to say the least, fleeting. "People at home, and even other corps out here, do not realize what the infantry have to go through. Such things as many nights out in the open, rain or no rain, long marches over roads which have almost become bogs, perhaps no

food all day, not because the A.S. Corps don't bring it up, but because you have a lot too much to do to eat it, and when you haven't got anything to do, you are too exhausted to eat it. . . . We manage to keep our spirits up and are quite cheery ; one feels very down when one loses a pal, but we feel it is impossible to turn aside the wheels of fate. So we leave them to their rest behind us, forget about them and cheer up."

Another officer wrote : " If there is such a thing as hell on earth this must surely be it. I have been in the firing-line for four days ; in the trenches for three, and just behind in support to-day, which isn't much better. They shell us nearly all day, and you have to creep into the farthest corner of the trench expecting the infernal things to burst on you. At present we are holding back thousands compared to our hundreds. They attacked yesterday and to-day in masses, but were driven back. I haven't washed or had my boots off since I got here, and am mud almost from head to foot, including hair."

CHAPTER XX

THE COURAGE THAT BEARS

THE courage that bears and the courage that dares are really one and the same.

At a certain period of the night it became exceedingly important that the enemy should have no indication of the position of a detachment of British infantry which had been moved up towards him. Unhappily a stray shot shattered an arm of one of our men. In his agony the poor fellow allowed a cry to escape him. Next moment, seizing a piece of turf with his uninjured hand he thrust it into his mouth, where he held it in position until he was able to crawl back through the lines.

Not less of the courage that bears was shown by Corporal Lancaster, of the Coldstream Guards. He received an agonising wound, but was warned by his comrades that if he groaned he would disclose their position to the Germans. He endured in silence for six hours and then died.

If patience is a form of courage, those men were very brave who went through the days and nights of

marching that had to be done during the retreat after the battle of Mons. "We were told if we fell out it was at our own risk as we would be captured by the advancing Germans. My feet were bleeding, the blood coming through the laceholes of my boots." Even when they were marching men fell asleep. The Army Service Corps had, at times, to work twenty-two hours out of twenty-four to get food up to the men.

A Royal Medical Corps man who worked on hospital trains wrote: "Some of the wounds are terrible, but the patients are very plucky. I asked in one carriage how they were. The reply, though not a man could move, was, 'We're all right, chum, our wounds are going on fine.' A few had lain where they fell on wet ground for four days, as they could not be taken away because of artillery fire. A man whose nose had been hit said that it always had been too big. A chap who had been wounded twenty-five times, said to a chum when the train was starting, 'Buck up, Jack, I'll meet you in Berlin for Christmas dinner.'"

Soldiers who have got bad wounds often speak of them as "mere scratches." They are plucky and do not want to annoy other people. If indeed they groaned and whimpered they would be told by their comrades to "shut up" and "make less row." A friend of the writer who is a Chaplain to

the Forces, speaking of the wounded after a battle, wrote : " But, oh, the patient endurance of these men. I would not have conceived it possible that they should have borne what they did bear so absolutely without complaint—nay, not only without complaint or murmuring, but with an unaffected gratefulness for not being worse, and for having escaped at all. They get their wounds dressed, take chloroform, give consent to have their limbs amputated just as if they were going to have their hair cut."

" Give them a cigarette and let them grip the operating table, and they will stick anything until they practically collapse," wrote Corporal Stewart, R.A.M.C., in a letter from the front referring to the British wounded.

A private of the Royal Munster Fusiliers did not mind a shrapnel wound in his left arm, but deeply repined that it had taken off a tattooed butterfly, which had long been his pride and joy. He consoled himself with the elaborate tattoos on the other arm—" But the loike of that butterfly I shall niver see agin," was his sad reflection.

" What gets over me," a soldier who had been shot in the foot remarked, " is how it ain't done more damage to my boot ! "

And wounded soldiers are most grateful for any attention that is shown to them. An Irishman who was brought into a hospital a mere wreck,

after being washed, shaved and put between sheets told his nurse that he could not "sleep for comfort," and then asked, "How can I thank you enough for what you have done for me? There's no use praying for you, for there is a place in Heaven reserved for the likes of you."

Of a nurse in a French hospital, which was a church, a British soldier wrote: "If ever anyone deserved a front seat in Heaven she did. God bless her! She has the prayers and all the love the remnants of the Fourth Division can give her."

How Ruskin would have appreciated the gratitude of a man of the Lancashire Fusiliers of whom a sergeant of the 5th Lancers wrote: "He had two ghastly wounds in his breast, and I thought he was booked through. He was quietly reading a little edition of Ruskin's 'Crown of Wild Olive,' and seemed to be enjoying it immensely. As I chatted with him for a few minutes he told me that this little book had been his companion all through, and that when he died he wanted it to be buried with him. His end came next day, and we buried the book with him."

War is not always exciting, but frequently monotonous, tedious and painful. All this is taken as in the day's work. "Sore feet are the great trouble, most of us being a bit lame. We also

get sore hips from sleeping and lying so much on the ground. . . . But don't imagine there are funkies. The first time we were in action most of us were a bit trembly, but soon the nerves got in hand, and our officers hadn't much use for their 'Steady, boys.' What gets at you is not being able to come to close quarters and fight man to man. As a fact, we see very little of the enemy, but blaze away at the given range and trust to Providence. For that matter we see very little of our own fellows, and only know by the ambulance men passing through our lines what regiments are near us. For hours we stick on one spot, and see nothing but smoke, and something like a football crowd swaying half a mile off. Our grub department works well, as we have not moved very rapidly, but it sometimes happens that outlying companies, and even regiments, lose touch of their kitchens for a day or even more. There has been some trouble caused by one lot collaring the rations meant for another, but that is bound to happen, even on manœuvres. It is all in a lifetime. Keep smiling. That's the way to win the game."

One of the 3rd Hussars wrote: "The work out here is very stiff; in fact, the Shop Hours Act doesn't come anywhere near it. We go out early in the morning and about the following week we think of coming in for a sleep. You would be

surprised if you were to see how cheerful all our troops are."

A soldier wrote to his wife: "After what I have gone through if I ever get home from the war I shall never grumble at meals or care where I sleep." Surely the thought of the hardships and wounds which our soldiers bore so bravely should cure our "nerves" and give us a little of their courage to bear.

Writing from an ambulance, Percy Higgins, of the Royal Medical Corps, said: "It is surprising to me that anybody should ever complain of ordinary aches and pains when you see men here with legs and parts of their bodies plastered up in plaster of paris, quietly reading and telling you they feel grand."

CHAPTER XXI

IN A MILITARY HOSPITAL

WHEN there is war a military hospital is a microcosm of its miseries, but the heroism of our soldiers greatly mitigates them. On the field of battle soldiers show the courage that dares, and when they are brought into hospital it is found that they have also the courage that bears.

"It's a treat," wrote a R.A.M.C. man, "to see the 'Tommies' when their wounds are being dressed. You may ask them twenty times if they are feeling pain, and they will say 'No,' or 'Only a trifle,' until at last they collapse."

The self-forgetfulness of some of the wounded is sublime. Writing of patients who had passed through No. 14 Clearing Hospital 5th Division, in France, Dr. Ludwig Tasker said: "We had one poor fellow whose tongue was actually on his neck, as the result of having had his left jaw blown off. Of course, he could not speak, and when, at a sign from him, I gave him a sheet of paper, all he wrote on it was that his captain was worthy of the Victoria Cross."

When Private H. S. Funnell, of the 2nd Sussex Regiment, died in a French Military Hospital, a nurse wrote this to his wife: "Your husband was apparently thinking about the battle a good deal, for quite at the last he called out: 'Come on, boys, at 'em again. I don't mind if they are six or a hundred to one. Last fight. I'm done. Good-bye, lads. The good old Sussex.'"

A medical man serving with the R.A.M.C. at the front, in a letter to a friend, said: "Our Tommy is a grand fellow. There was one—a Notts and Derby man—brought in last night. He was peppered all over, and I said to him as he lay on the table, 'What happened to you?' and he said, 'I got three damned coal-boxes'—the name we give to the big Black Maria German Shells. I said to him, 'Why did you try to stop three?' and he said, 'I couldn't get out of the way.' We dressed him in the head, the back, the right shoulder and the buttock, mostly nasty wounds. Then I said, 'Are you hit anywhere else?' and he said, 'Well, I think there are two or three on my right leg, but they don't matter. Will you give me a cigarette?' I gave him one, and he said, 'I'm used to this. I'm a collier, and I've been twice in pit accidents, but I'd sooner go through those than run up against another coal-box.' "

To have been wounded in eleven places is the

remarkable record of Private E. Johnson, of the Yorkshire Light Infantry, now in the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital at La Toquet. He tells his wife in a letter that he has pains in the head that nearly make him mad ; but forgetting himself and thinking of his children he continues : " It nearly breaks my heart to think I cannot send little Violet and Bessie and Lillie something for Christmas ; but never mind, let us hope we shall live for another Christmas."

A Highlander who had been maimed for life was asked afterwards in Hospital if he regretted becoming a soldier. He replied, " No, because I've had a good home and a man with a good home should fight for it."

An English artilleryman, who before the war was a professional footballer in the North of England, died in hospital. He had previously undergone amputation of both legs. Up to the end he chatted with two visitors who had come to solace his last moments. The dying man, who in his time had been a great centre forward, told them he did not fancy living with his two legs off while all the other " boys " were out playing, but declared he would not have missed the excitement of the last battle for anything. Refusing grapes and chocolate, he took a cigarette and said : " Have you any newspapers with you ? I should like to glance over the football news before I pass out."

There is an irrepressible Welsh Fusilier at the Stanley Hospital, Liverpool, who is known as "the Joker of the Regiment." He has three bad bullet wounds, and yet he is as cheerful as a lion comique, and keeps his fellows as cheerful as children at a circus.

After telling his mother in a letter that he was "in dock for repairs," a soldier continued: "This leaves me with a smile on my face, only I'll say good-bye, lest we should never meet again."

Rifleman P. King, 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifles, wrote from Portsmouth Hospital: "Since I have been home I have had a leg amputated 4 inches below the knee, so now one tin of blacking will last twice as long, as I shall only have one boot to clean!"

So it is that the brave spirit of our soldiers enables them to joke even at serious wounds. A hand of a Royal Irish Rifleman was shot off at the battle of Mons. For some time after being admitted to hospital he was very despondent about his future. How could he earn his living? One day, however, he broke out with a laugh. "If all else fails, I'll get a job as a shorthand writer."

Another Highlander, with arm terribly shattered by a shell, said: "I will be first-rate for opening taxi doors in the Strand; lucky it was my left arm."

A soldier told a reporter this about a wounded Highlander. When brought to hospital he began to swear, and those who had picked him up at great risk told him that this was a strange sort of gratitude to men who had most likely saved his life. "Maybe you have, and maybe you haven't saved my life," he said in his dogged, dour way. "A'm no saying onnything aboot that; but what A want to hear is what did ye dae wi' me wee cap. It's least, it is, an' A'll hae tee pay for another oot o' me ain pocket."

At all times a good soldier dislikes to go to hospital; but especially so on active service. He wants to do all he can for his country and he dreads to be suspected of "skrimshanking." The reluctance of Colonel Loring, who commanded the second Battalion of the Royal Warwickshires, to go to hospital caused his death, which was a great loss to the Army. Wounded in a foot by a shrapnel bullet he refused to go to hospital, had his foot bound up in a puttee when unable to wear a boot and led his men on horseback. This made him a conspicuous mark for sharpshooters, and after two chargers had been killed under him he was himself shot dead.

Great courage is shown by orderlies and ambulance men connected with a military hospital. There is the danger of catching infectious diseases and the

danger of collecting the wounded during and after a battle. For ambulance men there is no excitement, or the stimulus of " hitting back "; yet they often get hit themselves.

CHAPTER XXII

READY TO RETURN

I READ this in the letter of an Army Service man printed in *The Evening News*. "There was a Guardsman in hospital in France with me who had eight bullets in him, besides three ugly bayonet wounds. He had the constitution of a horse, and after he had his 'rattles,' as he called the bullets, taken out he swore that he would be back before Christmas to square accounts with the Germans. All he wanted was to return to the fighting."

"He lies upon his bed of pain.
Despite of nurses deft and kind
He is unhappy; it is plain
That something weighs upon his mind.
Ask him his dearest wish to name,
And, smiling even on the rack,
He tells, without a trace of shame,
How he is anxious to get back."

In a half humorous way our soldiers took their wounds. They knew from experience, as a distinguished officer once said to me, that a battle

field is a disagreeable place, but keen soldiers that they were, they thought that there was one thing worse than a battle, and that was not to be in one. Many soldiers were quite indignant at being sent home for what they called "scratches that will heal."

A sergeant was anxious to return to the war because he thought that he ought not to have been sent away from it. He was hit by five bullets, but why for this trifling matter should his colonel have ordered him out of the firing line and into an ambulance ?

Men make light of wounds in arms, hands and feet. "They have just earned us a little rest. We shall soon go back to the trenches again."

A correspondent thus wrote of a second Lieutenant of the Royal Scots: "Only this morning he drew me a picture of war and its effect upon the novice. 'Imagine your chaps groaning all around you, your best pal shot through the heart at your feet ; imagine the shrapnel screaming above—I was knocked down and stunned four times in a few minutes by shells exploding—imagine houses burning, women shrieking, and all about the place the mangled bodies of men and horses, and blood, blood, blood. I suppose I'm chicken-hearted, but I only left school last year.'

"'And your wound?' 'Oh, it's not much;

still, I'm going home this afternoon. Never want to see any more war.'

"Two hours later I saw him leap into a train labelled —. 'Where are you off to?' I asked. 'Back to the front. Can't bear the idea of my regiment being there and me loafing about some health resort.'"

A private of the Royal Sussex Regiment wrote this from a hospital in France: "My hand is very painful, but it will soon get better, I hope, as they want us back in the firing line, and every man away means fifty Germans kept alive and kicking."

Rifleman G. Harper wrote to his brother from a hospital at Paignton: "A bullet went through the left side of my face, struck my teeth, turned downwards, and just missed the main artery. The surgeon says I am one in a thousand to be alive, so it is better to be born lucky than rich. I don't think they will let me go out there after this, but if I get a chance I am off after their blood again."

A medical officer said to an interviewer, "I am glad to have been through the hottest part of the battle of the Aisne, and at the hottest corner, and only hope to get back in time to see the aftermath. The attitude of the wounded is wonderful, for all those who are not seriously hurt do nothing but talk about getting well and having another go at 'those — Germans.' "

After our King had visited in an hospital soldiers sent back from the war the spirit of all the wounded was voiced by a man who, describing his impression of the King's visit, said, "He's real human, that's what he is, and I, for one, shall be glad to go back and fight for him again."

"So shall I," came in chorus from every bed in the ward.

A corporal of the Coldstream Guards wrote: "If you look over the official lists of casualties you will see that I was 'killed in action,' so, strictly speaking, I ought not to tell you anything. I am looking forward to getting back to the firing line, and hope the Germans will find me a lively corpse."

For bringing fifty-nine men out of action when all the officers and non-commissioned officers were killed or wounded, T. Burns, of the Middlesex Regiment, was made a King's Corporal. At the battle of Mons a bit of shell hit him between his eyes and he got a bullet through a thigh and one through a wrist. Even this was not enough of it. "I am going out again as soon as I am well. I am itching for sweet revenge, or another coconut shie. 'All you knock down you have.' What a game!"

The Morning Post correspondent wrote: "I saw a colonel yesterday who has been invalided three times. He had seven bullet wounds, and had lost

two toes by a shell. The last time he was wounded, though he lay exposed to a murderous fire, he ordered away all rash attempts of his men to succour him. When his last wounds were healed in an hospital in the South of France he was so anxious to return to duty at the front that the only leave he asked for was twenty-four hours in Paris to visit his wife. "Not that the front is exactly pleasant, but because being away from it is just impossible."

A newspaper correspondent lately wrote that he saw a train full of officers and soldiers leaving London to go back after a few days' leave to their "funk holes" at the front. "They were," he wrote, "as cheerful as boys off to the seaside for a holiday."

Probably, however, some of our soldiers are not now as ready to return to the war as they were when they knew less about it. They have no desire again to "wade knee deep through blood." A wounded man who returned lately to England said when he found himself in a comfortable hospital bed, "I could do with a rest here until they send for me to make me Kaiser."

One of the Coldstream Guards, who had been invalided home, was asked if he was keen to return. He replied, "No, I am not a liar or a lunatic, and only a liar or a madman would say that he was anxious to return to hell. Still, I'll go if they want me with a good heart."

When a man has done his "bit" in the war he is sometimes unselfish enough to wish to give some one else a chance. Once bitten twice shy; turn about is fair play.

"Send out the Army and Navy,
Send out the rank and file,
 (Have a banana !)
Send out the brave Territorials,
They easily can run a mile.
 (I don't think !)
Send out the boys' and the girls' brigade,
They will keep old England free :
Send out my mother, my sister, and my brother,
But for goodness' sake don't send me."

Many soldiers who had retired from the Army were ready to return to it. It does them credit that they should in this way desire to help their country. One of these heroic volunteers is Piper Findlater. It will be remembered that he gained the V.C. at Dargai in October, 1897, when he continued playing "The Cock o' the North" after being wounded.

CHAPTER XXIII

FASHIONS AT THE FRONT

SLEEPING out in the open in all weathers is rough on clothes, and our soldiers had to treat themselves to new suits whenever they could pick them up. A Highlander was rigged out in the boots of a Belgian infantryman killed at Mons, the red trousers of a Frenchman, the khaki tunic of a Guardsman, and the Glengarry cap of his own corps. When he wanted to look particularly smart he wore a German cavalryman's cloak.

An Irish soldier complained that the trousers he had got from a dead man were tighter than his skin. "I can sit down in my skin, but I can't sit down in them trousers." Another said that he had been almost equally unfortunate. His nether garments were so short that they made him "look like a blooming boy scout." A trooper is reported to have said that he did not get a pair of Uhlans' boots to fit him until he had "knocked out six of the blighters."

The following is an extract from the letter of an officer in the Army Veterinary Corps :

"The British soldier has done all right. He is a most curious creature. When he goes to war he gives away most of his badges and all distinguishing marks to the nearest girl, loses his hat and replaces it with a chauffeur's cap or a felt hat, and by not washing or shaving for a week at a time makes himself look like a tramp or a gipsy, and as unlike a soldier as can be. He then—without the slightest warning—proceeds to show that he is the finest fighting man in the world."

The dress worn in the trenches makes us think of Robinson Crusoe. The "Trench Kit" consists of a short greatcoat of goatskin, with the hair outside, woolly Balaclava caps, and sandbags filled with straw for the legs and feet.

Rifleman Roberts wrote to his wife : "We have all got nice fur coats—'Teddy Bears' we call them—and they are all right, I can tell you. I have just got a complete change of new underclothing, all swansdown, and nice thick gloves and a scarf."

The Sergeant-major of the 1st Leicestershire Regiment said in a letter : "A barber would do a roaring trade here, no one having shaved for weeks. Beards vary according to the age of the individual. Mine, for instance, is something to gaze on and remember. They are not by any means what the writer of a lady's novellette would describe as a perfect dream."

In a letter to his mother an officer wrote: "I haven't washed for six days at all, as we have only one water-bottle each day for drink and all, and I don't know how long it is since I have had a bath. To-day I had my hair cut; you would faint if you could see it. It was done by one of the battery cooks with a pair of very blunt, loose scissors, and an enormous comb with all the teeth split."

A German bullet once did a little hair-cutting. It took the cap of a soldier off his head and made a groove in his hair just like a barber's parting. All thought that the German who fired the shot was a London hairdresser.

A private of the 4th Middlesex Regiment found two pieces of scented soap in a German haversack, and got greatly chaffed for using scented soap on active service. The luxury of a bath was indulged in by a company of Berkshires at one encampment. Forty wine barrels nearly full of water were discovered, and the thirsty men were about to drink it when their officer stopped them. "Well," said one, "if it's not good enough to drink it'll do to wash in," and with one accord they stripped and jumped into the barrels!

This was told of "wee Hecky MacAlister" by Private T. McDougall, of the Highland Light Infantry. Hecky went into a burn for a swim, and suddenly found the attentions of the Germans were

directed to him. " You know what a fine mark he is with his red head," says the writer to his correspondent, " and so they just hailed bullets at him." Hecky, however, " dooked and dooked," and emerged from his bath happy but breathless.

A sergeant wrote : " I happened to find a bit of looking-glass. It made a rare bit of fun. As it was passed from comrade to comrade we said, ' Have a last look at yourself, my boy, and bid yourself good-bye.' The laugh went round ; then ' Advance ! ' and we were all at it again."

" One man of the Life Guards was very particular about his appearance (says Trooper Walter Dale, now at Newcastle-upon-Tyne), and even in war-time always carried a little hand mirror about in order to take occasional peeps at himself to see that all was right. I happened to pass him on the field when he had been badly wounded. There he lay, with the glass in his hand, curling his moustache. I suppose he was anxious that when death found him he should be a credit to a smart regiment. I had to pass on that time, but the next journey we intended to take him to hospital. It was too late. He was dead, and his glass was still clutched in his hand. His ' quiff ' had been curled till it was a beauty."

A *Times* correspondent wrote : " Within sight of the spot where these words are being penned the chauffeur of the General Staff motor-car is completing

his morning toilet in the open. After washing hands and face in a saucepan, minus the handle, which is balanced on an empty petrol can, he carefully brushes his hair with an old nailbrush, using the window of the car in which he has slept as a looking-glass."

Another man had his toilet completed in a French hospital without any trouble to himself. After being sent to England because of a wound in his left thigh he told a friend that his finger nails had been manicured. "'Shocking fingers,' the French nurse said, 'for a young man to go about with,' so she brought a bowl of soapy water and a box of tools and manicured (that is what she called it) my finger nails."

A corporal of the Coldstream Guards wrote :

"There was a chap of the Grenadier Guards who was always mighty particular about his appearance, and persisted in wearing a tie all the time, whereas most of us reduced our needs to the simplest possible. One day, under heavy rifle fire, he was seen to be in a frightful fluster. 'Are you hit?' he was asked. 'No,' he said. 'What is it, then?'

"'This —— tie is not straight,' he replied, and proceeded to adjust it."

A motor-cycle despatch-rider wrote : "I have just had a hot bath and shave, and complete change of underclothing ; the shock may kill me, but it is a glorious feeling, and I am glad to say I have by the

use of iodoform kept free from vermin, which so many fellows suffer from out here."

"I hung my shirt out all night to dry on a tree," writes Lance-Corporal Laird, Royal Army Medical Corps. "At daylight I found that a piece of shell had taken the elbow of it. Good job I wasn't in it."

Some of the shirts wanted washing badly. Seeing a man busily examining his shirt, an officer asked him had he caught many. "Yes, sir," was the reply, "I think there's a new draft come in."

Fashion demanded a clean shirt when an Army Service Corps man went to a party. "We stayed at — four days. The inhabitants were delighted to see us as they felt much safer. Little did they dream of what was in store for them later on. A lady and a gentleman gave me and my two mates an invitation to tea. They came down the lines to fetch us. We made ourselves up as best we could under the circumstances. I put on a clean shirt, washed, shaved, and had a regular brush-up. We arrived at the house, or rather mansion, and were quite out of place, as we thought, walking on polished tiles in the passage, with our big heavy boots. It was a perfect slide. We took a seat by a big round table, had wine, cakes, tea, cigars and cigarettes. To our surprise, this lady's father was mayor of —. The lady, whose husband was with his regiment about

eleven miles away, sang us two songs in English, 'The Holy City' and 'Killarney.' It was a perfect treat to have one's legs under a table to drink from cups and saucers. Next day we thought it was a dream."

CHAPTER XXIV

GRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

MANY things surprised our soldiers on coming to France, and they described them with much humour. Speaking of the French soldiers a sergeant remarked : “Aren’t their trousers baggy ? They can march all the same, though. D’you know what they’re paid ? They get a halfpenny a day, and they’re paid every five days in a crossed cheque. Well, they seem glad to see us, don’t they, sir ? As soon as ever I pull up they gather round and want to shake my hand. It’s as bad as bein’ a parliamentary candidate.”

This is what a soldier said of the American Ambulance at Neuilly, where he spent four weeks when wounded : “My word, what an ’ospital. Had American millionaires to wait on us. They did it right, too. They’re a decent lot, them millionaires. Waited on us ’and an’ foot. An’ the grub ! All French, an’ cooked by a real French chef.”

Another soldier described French tobacco as

"something you have to smoke all day to get a smoke."

After his first fight with the Germans a soldier who had been through the last Boer war, said : " This is fighting if you like. South Africa was a tea-party to it. The shells go by with a horrible sort of hiss, and then burst with a roar that puts thunder in the shade, and if you are near you probably lose your head and arms, and various portions of your anatomy."

Writing of a wound, a sporting soldier said : " The next day, when partridge shooting was beginning at home, sure enough I was 'winged' among the turnips."

Another man said that when the shrapnel came it seemed as big as a motor-'bus and to hit him all over. " The shells were like small beer barrels in the air."

An Irish soldier wrote : " We charged the Kaiser's crush with a yell that would have put the fear of death into the heart of the most stoical, and with our bayonets we dug them out of their trenches, same as you'd dig bully beef out of a can."

An Irish soldier remarked to an interviewer when asked what the war was like : " There ain't anything to talk about. It's fight, an' march, an' fight again, with maybe a crack on the 'ead once in a while.

It is the biggest rifle meeting I ever saw—Bisley isn't in it."

The rain that fell in September in the trenches, he said, was so heavy that it was like as if the earth had been turned upside down and water had been poured in at the other side.

Another remark was that he had slept so much in odd places that now he thought he could sleep on a clothes-line.

Another soldier who slept in odd places was Lance-Corporal Waller, of the 4th Royal Fusiliers : "I have slept with strange company since I came out. One night with sheep, another in a schoolroom, once on top of a pigsty, once in a manger, in several ditches, in a first-class drawing-room, in 4 inches of snow, behind the counter of a café, and in a feather bed."

A gunner thus described the work of his battery : "We just rained shells on the Germans until we were deaf and choking. I don't think a gun on the position could have sold for old iron after we had finished, and the German gunners would be just odd pieces of clothing and bits of accoutrement."

One of the Black Watch wrote : "We have had a fiendish week of fighting around A——. We had to force our way step by step. Every inch we marched was coloured red with the blood of our men and the Germans. It was like passing through

a graveyard where an earthquake had turned up all the corpses and left them lying above ground. As we picked our way through the long lane of dead, that never seemed to have any turning, we noticed among them now and then wounded men, who begged hard for water or some assistance in doing up their bandages. It was pitiful, and we were so helpless."

Another soldier wrote: " You can always tell the Germans who have never been in action against us before. The ones who know what to expect come up very gingerly, like men sneaking into the vestry of a church to rob the collection boxes. The new hands come across in a fine, jaunty way until they get a volley into them, and then they stare up at the sky to see who's throwing things at them. That's the ones who are able to look up, for some of them are done for, and have looked at the sky for the last time. We are showing the Germans that there are a few goods marked ' Made in England.' Our officers are the real goods, the very best. If the Germans had been worth their house-room they would have put an end to the whole of us at the battle of Mons. They came on like a swarm of bees, and we did enjoy it. It was like firing at a mountain; you could not miss it. Sorry I can't stop to write more. We are going to business at 7 p.m. (' Where's my gun? ') What

would you like out of the crown jewels in Berlin ? That's where we are bound for."

Some soldiers who had lost their regiments gave this description of hiding from the Germans : " When night came we endeavoured to escape from our perilous position, and just outside the door we found a German sentry. We passed quite close to him, but didn't stop to say 'Good-night.' How we did it I can't for the life of me tell, but we did it, and then made off as we thought towards the British lines, but to our disgust found we were going right into the German lines. We decided, therefore, to anchor there for the night and get away in the morning. We found this was the German Headquarters Staff, so that we can say we dined with the German generals that night, the only difference being that they were inside and we were outside ; they were having wines, etc., and we had swedes and no etc."

A soldier said of a battle that it was " like a display of fireworks at the Crystal Palace with the wounded and dead left out. Last week we got shrapnel for breakfast, dinner, and tea, but the enemy might have saved himself the trouble of dishing out those doses, as they were absolutely ineffective."

One of our men gave a dying German soldier's opinion of the British Army : " When I was hit

I lay for hours on the ground, and got chummy with a German chap, who had got a nasty sabre cut in the head as well as a bayonet stab in the kidneys, and was 'booked through.' He knew his number was up, but he was as cheery as though he were at a wedding instead of a funeral. He talked about the fighting, and dealt out praise and blame to French, German, and British alike. He thought a lot of our Army, and spoke highly of its fighting capacity. He said it was wonderful the way we faced odds and difficulties that would have beaten any other army. Almost the last words he said were: 'You'll win this time, and you deserve to win your victory, but we'll never forget or forgive, and some day a new Germany will avenge us.'

The following descriptions are from the letters of soldiers: "Fighting's kindergarten work compared with lying in your damp clothes in the washed out trenches night and day with, maybe, not a chance of getting any more warmth than you can get from a wax match. We were lying in the trenches in the early morning, with chattering teeth, between which we were muttering prayers for only a spoonful of good brandy or rum to put some heat into us, when there arose a frightful din all round, and the pickets were driven in as though a team of mad bulls was chasing them through the meadows at home. 'We're in for it,' says I to Tommy

Gledhill, my chum. ‘Anything’s better than lying here,’ said he. ‘Anyhow, it’ll warm us up just as well as brandy, and it’ll help a few more Germans to a place where they’ll not be bothered with chills.’”

“ We have had a lot of fighting since the 5th. On Sunday we got it very hot indeed. Nothing less than hell with the lid off will describe it accurately, but please excuse my strong words. We had a fine time, I can tell you—a proper Guy Fawkes’ turnout.”

Three men of the 5th Lancers found a house that had been left in a hurry all complete with cooking pots. “ I am preparing the supper, which smells all right. I am perfectly happy, as this seems the proper country for me, and I never felt better in my life. I am picking up French all right, but I have not started eating frogs yet.”

One of the Somerset Light Infantry wrote: “ I made a pudding for the boys the other day. I swear it was bullet-proof, but, all the same, it went down with a little jam.”

The following is from a letter written by one of the Connaught Rangers and printed in *The Evening News*: “ Sure, and it was the grand time we had entirely, and I wouldn’t have missed it for lashings of money. It was near to Cambrai when we had our best time. The Germans kept pressing our rearguard all the time, and at last we could stand it no longer, so the word was passed round that

we were to give them hell and all. They kept pressing on and on in spite of our murderous fire until there was at least five to one, and we were like to be cut off. With that up got the colonel. ‘Rangers of Connaught,’ says he, ‘the eyes of all Ireland are on you this day, and I know you never could disgrace the old country by letting Germans beat you while you have arms in your hands and hearts in your breasts. On, then, and at them, and if you don’t give them the soundest thrashing they ever got in their lives you needn’t look me in the face again in this world or the next.’ And we went for them with just what you would know of a prayer to the Blessed Mother of our Lord to be merciful to the loved ones at home if we should fall in the fight. We charged through and through them until they broke and ran like frightened hares in terror of the hounds. They screamed just like babies. After that taste of the fighting quality of the Rangers they never troubled us any more that day, but next day more of them came up, and managed to cut off half a company of our boys holding a post on our left. The German officer rushed off to Tim Flanagan, the biggest caution in the whole regiment, and called on him to surrender the file of men under his orders. ‘Is it me your honour’s after talking to in that way?’ says Tim, in that bold way of his. ‘Sure, now, it’s yourself

that ought to be surrendering, and if you're not off this very minute, you ill-mannered German omadhaun, it's me will be after giving you as much cold steel as'll do you between this and the Kingdom of Heaven.' Then the German officer gave the word to his men, and what happened after that I can't tell to you, for it was just then I got a bullet between my ribs ; but I can tell you that neither Tim nor any of his men surrendered, nor did the Germans get that position until it pleased the colonel to order the retirement."

The Connaught Rangers, however, were not the only soldiers who revelled in a fray. Here is what even a sensible English soldier wrote in reference to a battle : " At 12.30 a shell hit my rifle and smashed it to matchwood. I next got my cap knocked off my head, and I went to pick it up. Then I got a bullet in the muscle of my right arm, which put me down for a couple of hours. But, never mind, my dear, I had a good run for my money."

Here is a pen picture of part of a battle : " Fellows were being knocked out all round, and wounded were crying for help. Frequently one would say to his neighbour, ' Bill, how's ta gettin' on ? ' but Bill, who had been as cheery as a cricket just before, was found to be picked off. Our ranks were so thinned that by the time we got within charging

distance of the enemy's trenches we had not sufficient men left for a charge. A shell burst close to me, and I thought I had lost both my legs. I crawled to a haystack, where there were a number of other wounded fellows, and one who was not. The latter was assisting the wounded. Presently some Germans came up, and ordered the unwounded man to run. He had not gone 10 yards when they shot him dead. I thought my time had come, but the Germans made off. An R.A.M.C. man had his head blown off while putting wounded men into an ambulance. I was close to Colonel Knight when he was killed. His last words were, 'Never mind me, men; go on and capture the guns.' The German shrapnel firing was absolutely deadly."

The effect of searchlights is thus described: "In the dark the Germans turned on searchlights. We could see them hunting about for someone to pot at. Uncanny that was. To see the blooming big lane of light working round and round. It was like a monstrous eye, looking for its prey. Then we heard the shells whistle. And when the pale, weird light came round to us and lit us up so that we could see each other's faces, Lord, it made my blood run cold—just as I used to feel when I was a nipper and woke up and saw a light and thought it was a ghost, and lay there wondering what would happen next."

CHAPTER XXV

UNCONSCIOUS HUMORISTS

IT cannot be claimed, perhaps, for any one class of society that they are more humorous than are others, but as soldiers live, day and night, in a crowd, they sharpen each other's wits, and their training has, or ought to have, the effect of making them good observers.

As the British soldier is brave without knowing it, so is he an unconscious humorist. He does not set up to be that sad thing—a “funny man.”

Our soldiers began the campaign against Germany facetiously by printing in chalk on the troop trains at Boulogne “No-stop run to Berlin.”

When our soldiers come home, you will hear some wonderful French. A man from Limerick asked a war correspondent to translate an English sentence into French. “I did it to the best of my ability. He looked at me very solemnly; then said: ‘Do it agin, sorr.’ I did it again, and he stopped me. ‘Whisht, hold yer jaw, or be me soul the guarrd’ll

arrest ye for a German spy ; yer Frinch is home-made an' brought up on th' bottle.' ”

A bombardier of the Royal Field Artillery wrote :

“ One of our fellows thought he would try for some eggs at a farmhouse. Naturally they couldn’t understand him, so he opened his mouth, rubbed his stomach, flapped his arms and cried, ‘ Cock-a-doodle-doo ! ’ The eggs came promptly. Another chap tried to get some bread at a farm. After he had made all sorts of queer signs the woman seemed to understand and said, ‘ Oui, oui, M’sieur,’ rushed back into the house and brought back a bundle of hay ! There was a terrific roar of laughter from the troops. The non-plussed look on the woman’s face and ‘ fed up ’ expression on the chap’s made a picture.”

Private Macnamara, of the Royal Fusiliers, relates that during the fighting on the Aisne a German called out to a company of Fusiliers : “ Wait till we catch you in our barber’s shop in London.” The Fusiliers wiped out the German company with the bayonet, a private shouting : “ You won’t get to London again.”

Another soldier wrote, probably joking : “ Our trenches and the enemy’s were only a couple of hundred yards apart, but we could not get the beggars to give us a chance to pot them. So at last I called out, ‘ Waiter ! ’ and up went five heads at once.”

At one time, when the German shells were particularly numerous, a private of the 1st Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry called out, "Fall in here for your pay, A company." There was a good laugh.

Another shell also caused a good laugh. In the rush to avoid it, two of our men fell over each other, and one actually sat upon the shell. It exploded. When the smoke cleared away the man was discovered to have escaped with very slight injuries to himself; but his trousers were torn to shreds, to the great amusement of his comrades.

A private of the Royal Irish Regiment wrote this to his mother: "There's plenty of hard fighting coming our way these days, and though we suffer cruelly once in a while, we always give them something to let them know that we have not lost our fighting powers in 'Paddy's land,' whatever else we may have lost. You could not help laughing at some of the tales the German prisoners have about us. When they knew they had been captured by an Irish regiment they wanted to know how it was we were not at home in the civil war that was going on. Says I to one of them that came off with that blarney in his queer English, 'This is the only war we know, or want to know, about for the time being, and there's mightily little that's civil about it or the way you are behaving yourselves.' "

It was the birthday of Pat Ryan, of the Connaught Rangers, and he thought that he ought to do something to celebrate it. Without telling anyone, he went out of the trenches in the afternoon, and came back after dusk with two big Germans in tow. How or where he got them nobody knows. The captain of his company asked him how he managed to catch the two. "Sure, and I surrounded them, Sorr," was the reply.

Even in the midst of a bayonet charge an Irish soldier caused laughter by calling out, "Look at thim German divils retratin' with their backs facin' us."

Private William Price, R.A.M.C., wrote : "Last Sunday week about 6 p.m. a shell (coal boxes we call them), eight inches wide and four feet long, passed through the roof and side wall of a barn in which the bearers sleep, and fell into the grounds of the hospital, where we were having a little service ; but, thank God, it didn't explode. Strange to relate, the subject of the sermon was 'Miracles,' and this was one of the greatest, for had it come a little later there would have been several of us having food and rest in the barn. The shell smashed heavy beams, hurling them just where I should have been resting. We buried the shell, and enclosed it with a fence. This is the verse we made up and placed on it :

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH, 1914.

"Here lies a shell of German invention,
To do us great harm was their intention ;
And in striking a barn it caused great alarm,
While the troops were singing the —th Psalm.
But don't be afraid, the danger is o'er ;
Still if it goes off we'll say 'au revoir.'
So now we'll conclude with love and affection,
Sincerely trusting there'll be no resurrection."

An Irish soldier told his mother in a letter that they had German shells for breakfast—not egg shells. She was not to believe, however, about the hardships they had to endure, even from her son. "I never believe anything I hear and only half of what I say."

Outside a temporary post office was the notice, "We close from noon to 2 p.m." Underneath a joker wrote, "Prussian cannon are requested to do the same."

The Germans, in crushing numbers, were about to enter a town. It was necessary to hold them back long enough to enable the British troops to retire in good order. A handful of Scots were selected for this duty. Sheltered in one of the first houses of the village, they kept up a well-sustained fire on the enemy, but had to endure themselves a perfect storm of bullets. The shattered windows flew in all directions. The walls were riddled with bullet holes. Already several of our men had

dropped. Suddenly the German fire ceased ; the enemy were evidently shifting ground to a better position, and one of those silent moments of waiting ensued—the worst of all to endure. While the pause lasted, a Scottish sergeant noticed that our frail fortress was a grocer's shop. On a shelf he found a few packets of chocolate. An idea occurred to him. Turning to his men, he held up the packets, saying : “Whoever bowls his man over gets a piece.” The German fusilade began anew. The Scots, roaring with laughter at the sergeant's marksmanship prizes, fired back as coolly as if at target practice. The sergeant, while keeping his own rifle busy, watched the effect of the fire on the advancing enemy. He recorded each successful shot with “Got him,” and handed over a cake of chocolate to the winning marksman. Alas ! there were few prize winners who lived to taste their reward.

Here is an instance of dour Scotch humour. Two Highlanders, one bigger than the other, were both hit, and there was only one stretcher available. The little one refused to enter it and the big one got angry at the refusal, so raising himself with his unwounded arm he cried, “ You go the noo, Jock, an if you're not slippy about it, you'll gaur me gae ye something ye'll remember when am a' richt again.” Jock didn't wait any longer after that.

A British cavalry subaltern who was cut off from

his men hid in the edge of a wood by a road. It was not long before he saw an unsuspecting armed German soldier patrolling the road. He could have shot the man without warning, but felt that it would be akin to murder to kill him in cold blood. In order to instil a little of the spirit of combat into the affair, therefore, he crept out of cover, ran up behind the "boch," as our Allies would call him, and gave him a ferocious kick. Instead of showing fight the startled and pained German gave a yell and ran for dear life, leaving the subaltern laughing too hard to shoot.

This sort of chivalry, however, had for once to pay a penalty. A patrol of the Gloucestershire Regiment met two German soldiers looting an orchard. They did not like to shoot them with their backs turned, so they shouted to give them a chance of defending themselves. One of the Germans turned about and sent a bullet crashing into the brain of the man who had been the first to suggest that they should be warned.

A Highlander writes home from the war to a friend that things are going so badly with "our dear old chum Wilhelm" that "I've bet X—a new hat that I'll be home by Christmas."

Bets are common in the trenches. Gunners wager about the number of their hits, riflemen on the number of misses by the enemy. A soldier told

a correspondent that they gambled in the trenches on the next man to be killed. "We'd get up a little sweepstake, draw names and—wait! There was always a favourite. I held that not altogether enviable position three times. But I disappointed my backers! One day I noticed that a fellow a few yards away kept on turning round to look at me. He did it so often that at last I realised with a bit of a shock that he had drawn me in the sweepstake. He was waiting to see me tumble down with a bullet through me. It would have been worth 15s. to him."

Here is an extract from a letter: "I received your request for a German helmet off a head I had knocked over. Will try to get you a German's ear or some other portable article. I am very fit and well, and trying to force British culture on the Germans. I think now we have put a spoke in the Kaiser's wheel for good, and I am proud to think that I have been a small splinter in the spoke."

It is unlawful to trade with the enemy, but our soldiers consider that it is legitimate to play practical jokes on the Germans when their trenches are near ours, as is sometimes the case. A beetroot field was near, so our men carved caricatures of the Kaiser on beetroot and inside put reports of the Allies' successes in East and West. The "busts" were then adroitly hurled into the German trenches.

This sort of pleasantry frequently led to furious abuse and the liberal exchange of bullets, generally harmless.

At one place the German trenches were advanced to within sixty yards of the British first line of trenches. The Germans had fixed up barbed wire entanglements, to which they attached here and there a number of empty jam tins, arranged in couples in such a way that on the slightest disturbance they were bound to jangle. Crawling very cautiously out in the dead of night, one of our men fastened the end of a ball of string to the nearest point of the barbed wire, and let the string run out as he crawled no less cautiously back again. The first tug at the string when he had regained the shelter of the British trench started a faint jangling, which startled the German sentries. The next produced a fusilade ; and the Germans blazed away at the clattering jam tins, while the British roared with laughter.

For nearly a week a battery of the R.F.A. on a ridge had been shelling the enemy's position, and the Germans could not find them ; but at last they did, and made it so hot for a time that the gunners had temporarily to leave their charges. When darkness fell, however, they removed the guns to a fresh position on the left, but, in order to mislead the enemy, they rigged up some ploughs and bundles of

straw to resemble guns, and left them in the old position. The ruse was entirely successful, and our men were laughing up their sleeve all the next day, for the Germans kept up an incessant fire upon the dummy guns.

In one trench, where a German sharpshooter regularly opened the day with a shot through a certain loophole, the trench amused itself by insuring being waked up for the fighting. They hung a strip of metal at the back of the loophole. The clang of bullet on metal woke them up—an alarm clock "made in Germany."

Here is a tale of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. The Germans opposite them get their rations—cognac, bread, and meat—every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday night. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders found this out, and regularly on these nights they did a bayonet attack, and brought back quite a lot of grub.

CHAPTER XXVI

NICKNAMES

THE nicknames that are given in the Army show what keen observers soldiers are. The German howitzer shells are eight to nine inches in calibre, and on impact they send up columns of greasy black smoke. On account of this they are irreverently dubbed "Coal-boxes," "Black Marias," or "Jack Johnsons" by our soldiers.

Guns were christened "Black Peter," "Stammering Sam," "Jimmy," "The Warbler," "Weeping Willie."

The German machine gun is called "The Carpenter," "The Gramophone," "The Alarm Clock," "Lightning."

All shells are "Souvenirs." Some are called "Will-o'-the-Wisps" and "Humming Birds." Some "Sighing Sarahs," some "Porridge Pots." "Woolly Marias" are shells that burst in double puffs of white woolly smoke.

"Baby" and "Mother" are far-reaching guns of

ours. The latter is so called because it takes good care of our infantry. Another gun has the name of "The Hot Cross Bun" because it is hot, snorts as if always cross, and takes the bun by its ability to hit what it is fired at nearly every time.

Bullets are called "Haricot Beans."

This is from a soldier's letter : "A chap in our company has got a ripping cure for neuralgia, but he isn't going to take out a patent, because it's too risky, and might kill the patient. He was lying in the trenches the other day nearly mad with pain in his face, when a German shell burst close by. He wasn't hit, but the explosion knocked him senseless for a bit. 'Me neuralgia's gone,' says he, when he came round. 'And so's six of your mates,' says we. 'Oh, cricky,' says he. His name's Palmer, and that's why we call the German shells now 'Palmer's Neuralgia Cure.' I am writing this under fire. Every now and again a little message from the Kaiser comes whizzing in this direction, but no damage is being done, and we don't worry. Bang ! Another message."

Our soldiers called the German General Von Kluck "Old One O'Clock," partly because of his name and partly because his troops nearly always attacked at that time of the night.

German soldiers are known as "Sausages" and the Uhlan Lancers as the "Ewe lambs." The

Kaiser himself is no more to our men than "Willie the Weed," or "Crazy Bill."

In letters from the front there used to be puzzling references to "Asquiths." Now we know this is the name for French matches, because you have to "Wait and see" what happens when you strike one. German snipers are known as "Little Willies" and some of the shells as "Whistling Willies."

The outer line of trenches, where the men are posted at first to draw the German fire, is known as the "drawing-room," and the inner line, where the attacks are really met, is called the "reception-room." The ground at the rear where the dead are buried is the "dormitory."

When a "Taube" aeroplane approaches British lines the men call out "Here comes a stormy petrol."

Between 9 and 10 p.m. German sharpshooters generally came out to fire on any man who exposed himself. This was called "The good-night kiss."

The emergency ration becomes "The imaginary ration." A British soldier was given by a Frenchman a tame rabbit. He kept it in one of the trenches; but called it an emergency ration, because, though fond of his pet, he might one day have to kill and eat it.

Very appropriate is the football metaphor, which describes spies as "playing off side" and prisoners as "ordered off the field."

Metaphor comes also from picture houses, and when a man says that he " has been given a stall for the pictures " it is understood that he has to do duty during the night in a rifle-pit close under the enemy's line.

Barbed wire entanglements are " fly traps " and " spiders' webs."

A certain village was called shrapnel village because the Germans shelled it all day and only killed a chicken.

CHAPTER XXVII

TENDER-HEARTED BECAUSE BRAVE

IN his farewell advice to the British troops sent to France, Lord Kitchener told them to be "invariably courteous, considerate and kind," and this they certainly were.

First of all they were kind to each other. Here is a tit-bit from a private soldier's letter : "One of our chaps got a letter from home to say that his wife had given birth to twins, and just at the time when he had cause to be proud of being a father twice over, a German bullet knocked him out. That was their way of adding to the congratulations that everybody showered on him. It was hard lines, and there was not one of us who would not rather have gone in his place."

Another soldier told with much sympathy that his chum immediately after writing to his mother, "I have got through without a scratch so far" was killed by a bullet. "I could have cried," he said, "when I saw the letter."

In letters from the front many cases are recorded

of men who have lost their regiments, but who would not accept shelter or food from the French peasantry for fear of getting them into trouble with the Germans.

We are told that the only thing that put our men out and made their faces sad was the instances they saw of German savagery to the civilian population. A man of the Army Service Corps wrote : " It was a pitiful sight to see the people fleeing from their homes carrying all they could save. Our soldiers were very kind to them, and gave them whatever they could spare—and sometimes more than that. I saw one young woman trying to reach some fruit from a tree which was a good way out of her reach. I went over and gave her some pears which had been given to me. She ate them rather hurriedly, but before doing so gave me a kiss on both cheeks."

It was the tender hearts of the British soldiers, as well as their coolness and courage, that made the old women and little children take to them as they marched through France. " Cheer up, mother," one soldier shouted, and another covered a shivering old woman with his coat. A French woman's clothes had been taken by the Germans, so a Highlander tore his kilt and gave her part of it for a covering.

The children took hold of the hands of the brave Allies, or tried to get a ride on their shoulders.

A British sergeant went into a French farm house

that had been shelled by the Germans. He found that all the family had been killed "except a little girl of about seven years, and she was just conscious. Both her legs had been blown away near the knees, and one of her arms was missing from below the elbow. The rain was coming down into the wreckage, and I took off my greatcoat and wrapped the poor, moaning child in it. I sat down on the floor to hold her on my knee, and she just opened her eyes and gave me a grateful look. Then she moved her sound arm, and the next thing I found she had lifted something to my head, and it slipped over my shoulders. Her arm dropped. She was dead. She had given me her rosary. I thought I had a heart of stone, but I cried like a child that night, and I wasn't the only one."

And our soldiers were most thoughtful about those belonging to them whom they had left at home. A sergeant thus wrote of a brawny Yorkshireman who had lost his regiment : " His chief grievance was that he had not been able to write and tell his wife where he was and how he was getting on. ' Tha' sees, lad,' he remarked in perfect seriousness, ' th' missus knows that now and then I drink one or two more glasses than's good for me, and she'll be gettin' anxious.' A few days before he had been in a terrifically hot engagement, yet the only thing that worried him was the fear that the ' missus ' might

be anxious about what he called the ‘teetotal lay’ ! ”

Private F. W. Dobson, 2nd Coldstream Guards, wrote this to his wife :

“ It is with the greatest pleasure that I write this letter, as it is our wedding anniversary—September 30th. I only hope we shall spend the next one together. You will know by the time you receive this letter that I have been recommended for the V.C.—an honour I never thought would come my way. In fact, I do not yet realise that it is possible. I only took my chance, and did my duty to save my comrades. It was really nothing, but I shall never forget the congratulations and praise I received from our officers, my comrades, and a Brigadier-General.”

A sergeant of the 18th Hussars ended a letter to his wife with these “ home-sick ” words : “ Oh for a cup of tea with you. Your worst cup of tea would come in very nice now.”

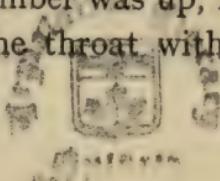
Private O’Dwer, of the Irish Guards, said in a letter from the front to his wife : “ It was a great relief to hear from you. I was just having my tea during a lull when I got your letter, and didn’t I enjoy my tea much better. On Tuesday last I escaped by a miracle from a bomb thrown from an aeroplane. It did no damage, only made a very large hole in the ground just where we were digging trenches.”

Scrawled on the back of this letter which appeared in *The Evening News*, was the following :

" Darling,—I am now lying in a forest with my leg shot off and don't know when the ambulance will turn up. It's awful. We were completely cut up. I hope to see you again. Love to baby and all.—Jack."

A King's Royal Rifleman wrote to his wife that the framed photograph of herself and of their children, which was in his breast pocket, stopped a bullet. "Last night in the trenches I dreamt I was back home again and was playing with little Gracie and telling her some stories of the fighting. Tell her I will bring her something, if it is only the Kaiser."

Private G. Tomkins, of the Royal Sussex Regiment, wrote this to his sister : " We have a saying out here, ' Don't dream of home.' When a man has a particularly vivid dream of home he knows that he will be killed in his next fight. There was a man of ours that awoke the other night from a beautiful dream. He thought he was back at home on the conclusion of peace, and he had a great reception from his wife and two children. The two little ones were crawling all over him, and laughing with delight. They were all happy, and the thing was so vivid that he had to tell us all about it. It seemed to please him. Sure enough his number was up, for that afternoon he was struck in the throat with a



bullet, and as he died the only words he uttered were : ' Oh, my God, I shall never see my children again.' "

In the trenches on the Aisne after a hard fight, a wounded Seaforth Highlander found one of the Gloucesters with an unfinished letter in his hand. It was written to his wife and little girl. It spoke hopefully of the future, and said : " Tell Annie I will be home in time to make her Christmas tree." He never got further, for a German shell had laid him out.

An officer of the Bedfords, while in the trenches, was opening a parcel and a letter from his wife, and in the excitement of the moment the poor fellow forgot to take cover and he was shot through the heart.

A pathetic incident also occurred in the case of a private. He was shot in the chest and the bullet also passed through a corresponding spot in a photograph of his wife, which he carried with him.

A private in the Northumberland Fusiliers wrote : " I came across a young chap sitting with his back against a tree—dead, and around him in a circle he had placed all his letters and photographs, as much as to say : ' Please post these to the people concerned, as I am dying.' Another chap had in his hand the photograph of his wife and child."

Talking one evening at a camp fire, a soldier re-

marked : " I've got four little nippers. George, the eldest, is a proper little chap. He sent me a post-card out here of a black cat and wrote on the back of it ' Please stroke the cat every night for luck.' I never forget to do that before I go to sleep."

Our soldiers certainly have domestic affections. At a parade service near the trenches they were singing away in fine style :

" Can a woman's tender care
Cease toward the child she bare ? "

The singers broke down and the lines had to be left out.

The following was sent by Private Ingram, 2nd Welsh Regiment, to cheer up his mother and encourage his brother :

" As you say, the Germans do want 'boiling,' and we are all trying our best to do it, too. I am glad to hear Arthur [a brother] has joined the Army. Do not worry, for it is all for the best, and remember that a soldier's death is a glorious one. To die fighting for my country is the greatest honour I could have, and I am glad Arthur thinks so too."

In romance and even in history it is the lover who shines in war, who achieves, who conquers, whose deeds of daring save situations at the psychological moment and help to win battles and wars.

When the Guards were leaving London for the war, a girl leaning on the arm of her soldier lover

said, "Keep your pecker up, Dick." "Taint me," he replied, "as needs keep my pecker up, but German Bill." Women have much to do with keeping up or keeping down a soldier's "pecker."

"Thy voice is heard through rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes
And gives the battle to his hands."

In a letter from the front, a private of the Leicestershire Regiment wrote : "There was a chap of the Berkshires who, like many more of us, had 'listed' after a row with his girl. At the crossing of the Aisne he got hit, and had just breath enough to tell me the name of the girl and ask me to write to her. 'Tell her,' he said, 'I'm sorry we had that row, but it was for the best, for if we hadn't had it I should not have been able to do my bit for my country. It seems awfully hard that I can never see her again to explain things to her, but I'm sure she will think better of me now than if I had been one of the stay-at-homes. Good-bye, old chap; there'll be no more cold nights in the trenches for me, anyhow.'"

Sergeant E. W. Turner, West Kent Regiment, wrote to his sweetheart : "The bullet that wounded me at Mons went into one breast pocket and came out of the other, and in its course passed through your photo."

A man said that when hit by a splinter of shell

he believed half his face had gone, but was now sure that when the bruises had gone from his eyes his girl would recognise him.

A R.F. Artillery gunner wrote : " I harnessed up, and after a mad gallop of 2,000 yards or so we came into our first action. We opened fire immediately. It was just like our practice camp, except that I think everybody realised that we were firing at targets composed of flesh and blood instead of canvas, but having to concentrate our minds on the working of the guns it soon passed off."

Yes, our soldiers did realise that the enemy had feelings like themselves. After a battle a gunner wrote : " Their dead lay so thick at one point in front of our trenches that we couldn't get our guns across, because we were squeamish about riding over their dead in case there should be wounded men mixed up with them."

In many letters we read of our soldiers giving food when they had not much for themselves to wounded Germans.

A British officer who was being moved off on a stretcher with a shattered arm, noticed a German being helped in with a wounded leg. The officer at once got off the stretcher, saying, " Put that man on here. He is hit in the leg and I am hit in the arm and able to walk."

A Somersetshire Light Infantryman saw a

wounded German in the river Aisne. He dived in and was bringing him out when a German shell burst and killed them both.

An Army Chaplain saw an English wounded soldier lying next a German wounded prisoner who was shot in both arms ; the Englishman was holding a cigarette whilst the German smoked it.

One German gave a gold ring and another his helmet as souvenirs to two British soldiers who had given them water and bandaged their wounds.

The German prisoners got quite fond of our soldiers. One of them escaped, but returned next day with eleven others whom he had persuaded to desert.

In a lane through a wood at Soissons a correspondent met two British infantrymen helping a wounded German towards the place where they hoped to find an ambulance. The German had been badly hit in the upper part of the body and again in the thigh. He was in agony and kept protesting under his breath that he could go no farther. His friendly enemies almost carried him between them, and they were talking to him after this fashion : " Come on naow, ol' pal. You ain't goin' to give up naow. Almos' there, we are. Jus' be'ind them there trees over there. 'Ere, take a drink o' water an' you'll feel better. Come, ol' man, be a sport naow."

The following is from the letter of a corporal of the Highland Light Infantry : " In the retreat from Mons an artilleryman, slightly wounded, asked a German for water, and was refused. On the Aisne last week the artilleryman recognised the same German among a party of wounded, whose cries for water couldn't be attended to quick enough. The recognition was mutual, and the German stopped his crying, thinking he was sure to be paid back in his own coin. The artilleryman took out his water bottle and handed it to the German without a word. You never saw anybody look so shamefaced as that German."

Private Cooley, of the 2nd Connaught Rangers, told this story. Cooley, with a comrade, was left in charge of a German officer and eleven German privates, who had been found wounded in a cave. " They asked us, in broken English, for biscuits and water. We only had eleven biscuits and half a bottle of water left, and this we divided among them as best we could. At daybreak the Germans' shells fell all round the cave, and part of the roof fell in, while shrapnel came through the opening. The German officer wanted us to put out a white flag ; but you can guess what reply I made to that. Three of the poor devils were suffering from terrible wounds, and one died at four o'clock in the afternoon. About six o'clock it began to rain, and we managed

to collect enough rain-water to moisten their mouths. We could not help pitying them, although they were Germans. About eight o'clock we recognised the voice of the officer who had brought us up, and we were not sorry. It was the worst twenty-six hours I have ever spent. There was a bearer party with him, and they took the men into hospital."

A wounded Dublin Fusilier lay for a time among German wounded and found that one of them was in danger of bleeding to death. The bandage the Fusilier had to use for his own wound was the only one available. Without the slightest hesitation he handed it over to the German, whose life was saved by the application in time of that antiseptic bandage. Unfortunately that act of self-sacrifice cost the Fusilier his life, for he developed blood poisoning through the wound not being bandaged at once, and was buried a few days later. When the German who had profited by that lad's sacrifice heard of it he cried like a baby, and for a while they had to put him under restraint for fear he should take his own life.

A private of the Coldstream Guards said that they heard a German who was lying on the ground between the lines calling out, "Comrade, comrade; Englander, Englander!" When night came two of our men went and brought him in. He had five wounds.

An officer of the Yorkshire Light Infantry wrote : " There is none of that insensate hatred that one hears about, out here. We are out to kill, and kill we do, at any and every opportunity. But, when all is done and the battle is over, the splendid universal ' soldier spirit ' comes over all the men. To give you some idea of what I mean, the other night four German snipers were shot on our wire. The next night our men went out and brought one in who was near and get-at-able and buried him. They did it with just the same reverence and sadness as they do to our own dear fellows. I went to look at the grave the next morning, and one of the most uncouth-looking men in my company had placed a cross at the head of the grave, and had written on it :

' Here lies a German,
We don't know his name,
He died bravely fighting
For his Fatherland.'

And under that, ' got mitt uns ' (*sic*), that being the highest effort of all the men at German. Not bad for a bloodthirsty Briton, eh ? Really that shows the spirit."

The Germans have made several discoveries about the British soldier, and know now that he has a kind heart. An officer in the Prussian Guards put

his arms round the neck of a British officer and said,
“ Mercy, officer ! ”

Brave men are kind to dumb animals, and our soldiers were this. A veterinary officer wrote : “ Our horses have stood the tough marches with remarkable freedom from lameness and sore backs, which is testimony to the very great consideration and kindness which the troopers and drivers show to their dumb friends. I have particularly noticed, since riding with patrols, how anxious the men have been after a heavy day in the saddle to feed their horses and give them a rough rub down before taking a bite or a drink for themselves. They always dismount and feed them on all occasions with hay and wheat found on the farms and in stacks in the fields, also with clover.”

“ A man of the 17th Lancers, who had lost his horse near Binche in August last, had a curious adventure. In a fight with a patrol of Uhlans he recognised his old mount ridden by a German. The animal recognised him and broke away from the enemy’s ranks, carrying the German rider with him. After the new master was put out of action there was a joyful scene between the old master and the lost horse.”

Writing to his father a trooper in the Royal Horse Guards speaks in this way of his charger : “ Dolly goes very well. She doesn’t always get corn, so is a bit thin. Thanks for remembering my

best friend. I always pinch the smallest thing for her, if it be only a muddy crust. She greatly enjoyed the sugar you sent for her."

Trooper S. Stanley, Royal Scots Greys, wrote thus: "I owe my own life and that of perhaps a whole army to my old horse. I was on outpost duty at a lonely spot, and though I could not hear or see anything my horse kept neighing and betraying signs of restlessness. I got down and came on a German crouching in the long grass. He had a sword bayonet, and evidently meant to get me unawares, and then the post would have been rushed. I didn't wait to ask his intentions, but let him have a ticket for another country. His yells brought his mates down, but I got away, and the row alarmed the guard and spoiled their attempt at surprising us. You bet the old nag had a special feed that night."

CHAPTER XXVIII



WHAT THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS THINK

AFTER studying our soldiers for a considerable time a special correspondent of *L'Indépendance* wrote : “ ‘Tommy’ . . . loves to laugh ; he has clear eyes and smokes almost continually a cigarette or a pipe. He is a sportsman, who views war as a continuation of the sports he practises in peace times. No one could be more placid than he. He does not know what it is to be nervous. Two ‘Tommies’ at the beginning of the war were driving a motor-wagon from Rheims to Amiens. They missed the way, and arrived at Rouen. ‘This is not the way,’ someone told them, ‘towards Amiens ; you will perhaps meet Germans.’ ‘That doesn’t matter. If we meet them we will shoot them,’ was the reply. That is the state of ‘Tommy’s’ soul. He is convinced that everything will be right. He never loses an opportunity of taking ‘un tub’ as thoroughly as decency permits in the circumstances. And for nothing in the world will he neglect to

shave with care. Recently there arrived at an hotel, over which flew the Red Cross flag, a wounded English soldier. He had a piece of shell in the right hand, two bullets in his left shoulder, and one in his stomach. He went, first of all, to the barber's shop on the ground floor of the hotel. They pointed out to him that the ambulance entrance was at the side. 'I see,' he said, 'but I must be shaved first'!"

A French officer was also surprised at the extensive toilet of our soldiers : "At Ypres I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Tommy Atkins, whose smart appearance and jovial manner I greatly admired. He's a perfect soldier. I saw him one morning making his toilet when Taubes were flying over our heads and dropping bombs not far away. He shaved first, and then, with a bucket of hot water standing on the step of a railway carriage, washed himself, much soap and rubbing with a large towel. I lost sight of him just when he was putting his tooth-brush into a pot of paste to clean 'his teeth.'"

The correspondent of the *Petit Parisien* wrote that he was impressed by the excellent spirits and devotion to duty of the British troops, and the fraternal solicitude of the officers for their men.

"Ah, those British soldiers!" exclaimed a French officer. "In my regiment you only hear such

expressions as '*Quel soldats !*', '*Ils sont superb.*' How splendidly they behave ! In their discipline and their respect for their officers they are magnificent."

The French people were delighted with the size of the Highlanders, and with the kilts they wore. A woman shouted out in admiration as they marched past : "There go the women from hell." She thought that was the biggest compliment she could pay.

The French were surprised to see our men going into battle singing songs and playing mouth-organs. They liked their gaiety and sporting spirit. If they had understood the words they would have relished in the following marching song the allusion to the Kaiser's order for the extermination of General French's "contemptible little army" :

" What ! Wad ye stop the pipers ?
Nay, 'tis ower soon !
Dance, since ye're dancing, William,
 Dance, ye puir loon !
Dance till ye're dizzy, William,
 Dance till ye swoon !
Dance till ye're deid, my laddie !
 We play the tune ! "

The French must have been astonished at the pipes of the Highlanders when they heard them first at Boulogne and at the marching song of the Irish :

" It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go,
It's a long way to Tipperary,
And the sweetest girl I know.
Good-bye, Piccadilly !
Farewell, Leicester-square !
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's just there."

For some time about twenty men of the London Scottish Highlanders did military police duty in Paris, and patrolled the streets every day looking after British soldiers who might be in the city for any reason. To the people on the boulevards this patrol was a popular institution, and they gave loud "Heep—heeps" and cheers for old England when they saw them coming. The kilt of the Highlanders no doubt had something to do with this admiration, and the curiosity of the fair sex must have been at times embarrassing. But the dignified bearing of the men, their genial courtesy, and their strict attention to the business in hand sufficiently explained their popularity.

The French soldiers said that the charges of the British cavalry at Lille were marvellous. They also admired the way the British artillery was served, and on one occasion at least they had good reason for doing so. Their 205th regiment of infantry was almost surrounded by German infantry with machine guns. One by one the officers fell, and the regiment

was led by sergeants. On the point of being forced to surrender they saw, to their immeasurable relief, several batteries of the Royal Field Artillery dashing up behind across the shell-swept field towards them. So terrific was the German fire that it seemed almost impossible that the guns could come into action. The traces of the horses struck were instantly cut ; men jumped to seize the reins when comrades fell. They swept out into more extended order, wheeled round, unlimbered, and in a few seconds were shelling the German positions. In ten minutes the Germans retreated and the French regiment was saved.

The following extract from a letter from the front lets us see one reason why British soldiers were popular in Belgium and France : " The last place we were reserve, and occupied a village. Our company was at an inn. The innkeeper used to get very nervous when he heard the firing of big guns, and often asked me confidentially to tell him when I thought it was necessary for safety to depart. His wife and family and many of the women of the village had already gone. One day we got a little shrapnel over us, and you should have seen the excitement everywhere. People began to push off, and one saw huge carts full of women and children going to safety. It was too much for Monsieur when the shells began to burst over the village. He solemnly dressed himself in his best, and almost with

tears in his eyes entrusted his house to us to be at our disposal, and pushed off some miles back. The soldiers had the run of everything in the inn ; not a thing was locked. Next day, as things were quieter, Monsieur turned up with a beaming face, expecting to find half his things gone ! He couldn't make it out as he went up and down and found not a thing touched, and yet the soldiers had been there all the time ! Finally he came to us and expressed his entire admiration for the British Army and the excellent discipline which prevailed."

Trooper W. Green wrote : " The French girls are awfully keen about our men, and you should see them when we arrive in any of the towns. They come and link arms with us until they are a blooming nuisance. It's just goodness of heart, and we don't like to be chivying them off, so they usually get buttons, badges, or anything they can beg off us just for a keepsake. We couldn't be better thought of."

How well our wounded soldiers were tended in France is shown by the following letter from a French nurse, who received her training in this country :

" Last Sunday I went to see some wounded English soldiers at Versailles. They are nursed in one of the largest and newest hotels there. You should see how happy and jolly they are, and how petted by

the French people who go to see them and take them tea, grapes, cigarettes, etc. Your soldiers are great favourites here. They are so glad when they meet with somebody who speaks English. I spoke to them about England and English people, and we sang English songs—‘Dolly Gray’ and ‘Tommy Atkins.’ They made some tea and gave some to all the ladies present.”

A French woman who could speak English said laughingly to a Highlander, “If you kill the Kaiser you may marry my daughter.” The soldier replied that he would do that all right and that she could have a hair of William’s moustache.

Of a French lady, at whose house four British soldiers were billeted, one of them wrote: “She was wondrous kind, and when we left for the front Madame and her mother sobbed as if we had been their own sons.”

Here is another little tribute: “I am very pleased with the way the French have treated us. They are good-hearted people. Don’t matter who you see out they all salute you, and the ladies bow to you. What more could you wish for?”

This man went on to say that he was always addressed as *Monsieur* (Why not?) and that he began to think that he was an officer.

And the Belgians also think of the British soldier as a kind-hearted rescuer.

A little girl, an orphan refugee from Flanders, was taken and cared for by a family in a London suburb. In spite of the kindness that encompassed her, she was unhappy and full of terror. She remembered the strange people with a strange tongue who had swept down upon her home in Flanders, and the brutality and horror that followed their incursion. The English people with whom she stayed were kind, but they were strange, and their tongue was strange, and they terrified her. One day the son of the house came home. He was in the New Army, and he wore khaki. At the sight of the khaki the little girl flung herself at the boy, clung about his legs, and called out "Anglais! Anglais!" She knew now she was safe.

A wounded Seaforth Highlander heard that a woman with a newborn baby was in a cottage in a village that was being shelled by the Germans. He left the Red Cross van, rushed in and saved both mother and child as a shell crashed through the roof. As he left another shell demolished the cottage.

"I have often seen the British soldier," says a French correspondent, "sharing his breakfast with starving Belgian refugees. In a corner of the big courtyard where the British troops are quartered, I saw a little girl of ten fast asleep on the straw. Two English troopers, men with grey hair and moustaches,

had tenderly covered her up in a thick brown rug, and were watching over her as she slept. I went up and asked them how the child had come there. They told me as they were returning from the front after hard fighting they came upon the child. Her parents had been shot, and she was alone in the world. At that moment the child woke up, and, seeing a stranger talking to her friends, asked anxiously if he had come to take her away. 'I don't want to be taken away,' she cried; 'I want to stay here.' The stranger reassured her, and the little one, pacified, was soon fast asleep again."

No wonder that a British officer was able to write :

"The Belgians are delighted to see us. As we entered one town all the population turned out and cheered, and gave the men cigars and cigarettes. It was almost embarrassing riding in at the head of the column; it was almost like a Royal progress. It is very extraordinary the faith the Belgians have in the British Army. Directly they see any British troops they seem to think that all will go well."





**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET**

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY

D Hardy, E. J. (Edward John)
640 The British soldier, his
H326 courage and humour

